100% OFFICIAL CONTENT

RETURN TO MAURE CASTLE WITH ROBERT J. KUNTZ

SPECIAL OVERSIZED ISSUE! GIANT POSTER INSIDE!

YOUR NEW CAMPAIGN STARTS RIGHT HERE!

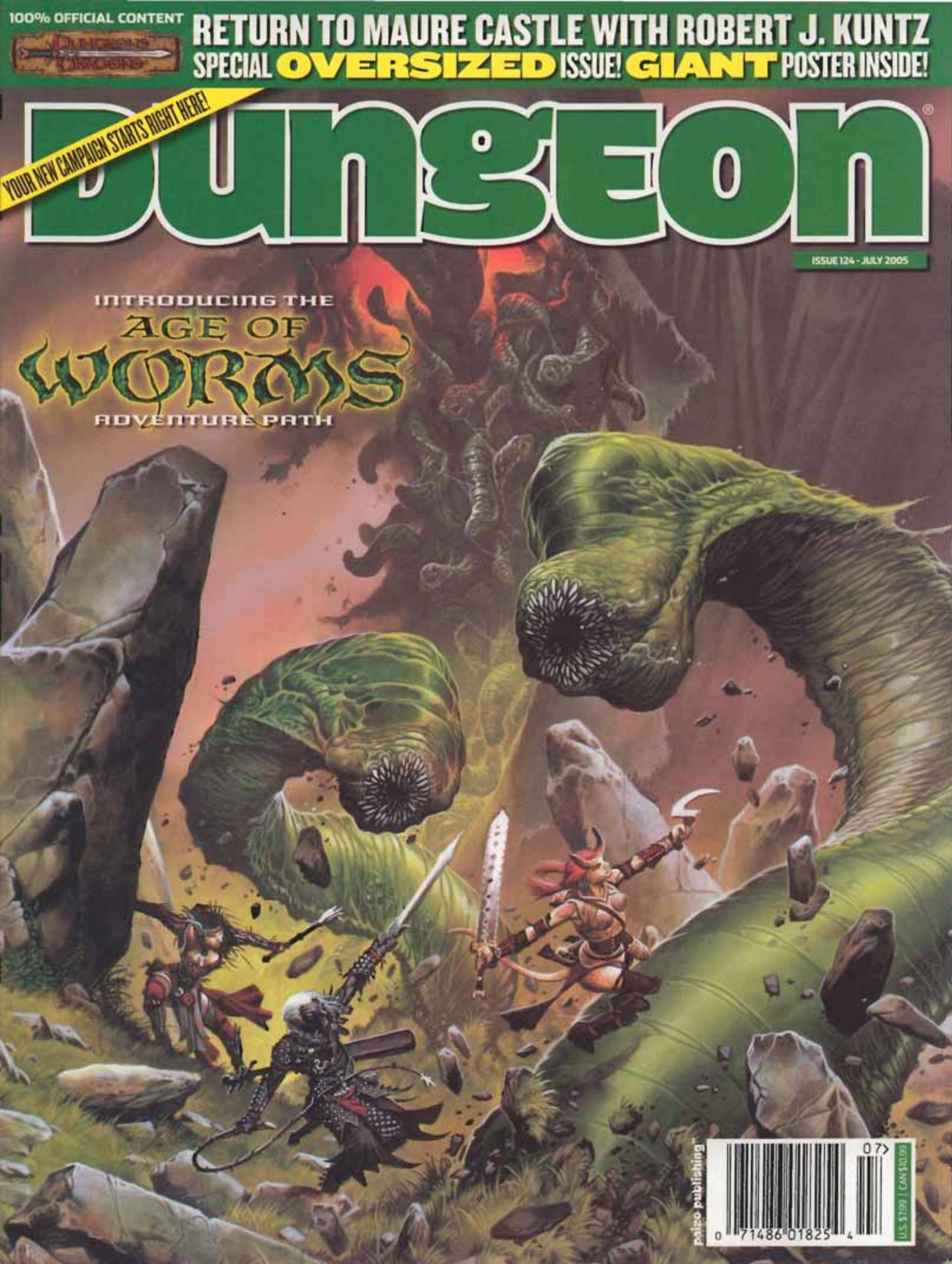
DUNGEON

ISSUE 124 · JULY 2005

INTRODUCING THE

AGE OF WORMS

ADVENTURE PATH



paizo publishing™

0 71486 01825 4 07

U.S. $7.99 | CAN $10.99

THE FIRST DUNGEONS & DRAGONS REAL-TIME STRATEGY EXPERIENCE

Plunge leaders underground for vital RPG battles

Master unique building and unit strategies

Control technology and sorcery from the new world of Eberron

Direct troops across jungle, mountains, wastelands

ATI

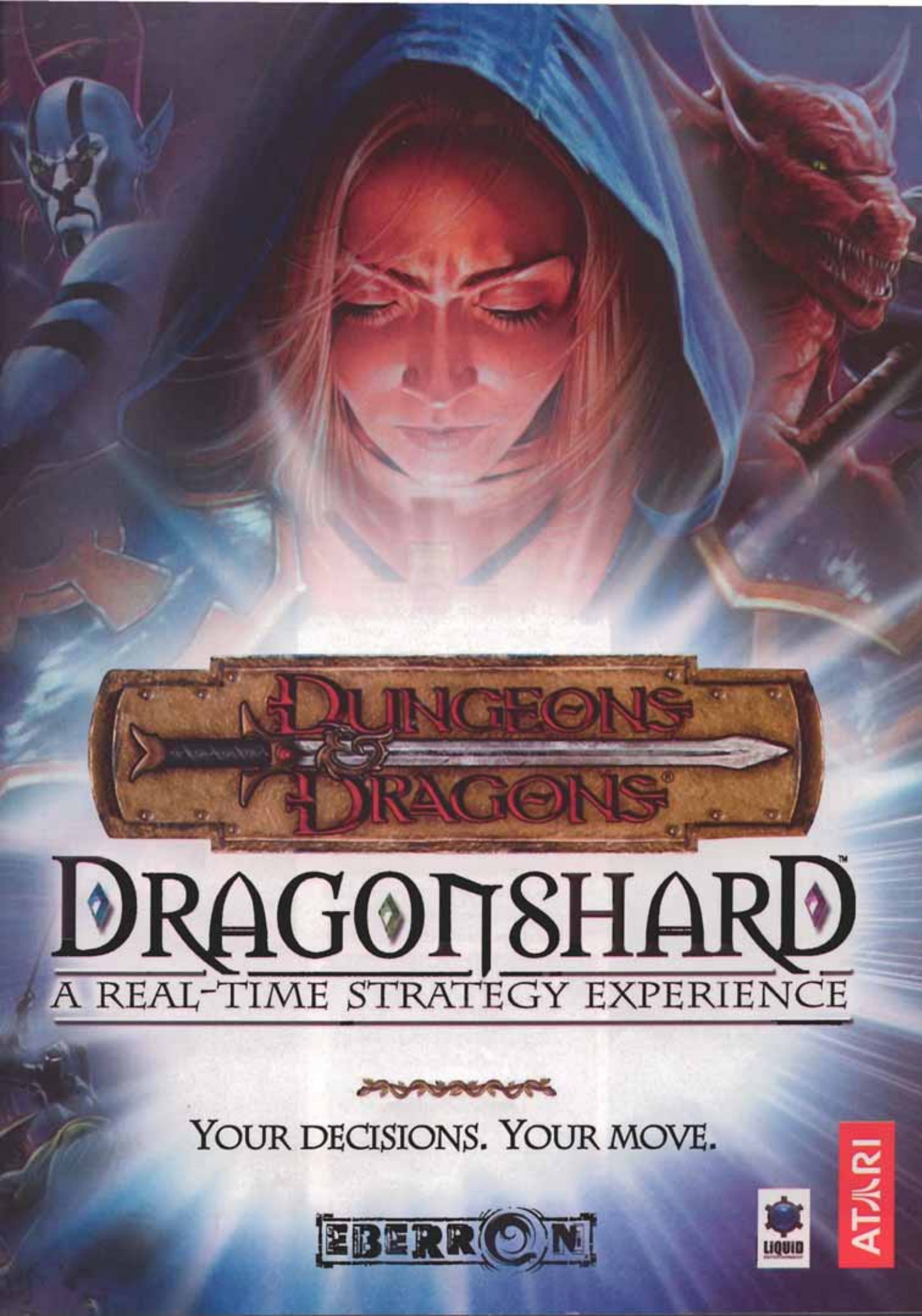
Licensed by Hasbro Properties

RP RATING PENDING ESRB

Visit www.esrb.org for updated rating information.

atari.com/dragonshard

PC CD-ROM SOFTWARE


DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®
DRAGONSHARD™
A REAL-TIME STRATEGY EXPERIENCE
YOUR DECISIONS. YOUR MOVE.
EBERRON
LIQUID
ATARI

ISSUE #124 JULY 2005 VOLUME 19, NO 7

DUNGEON

paizo.com/dungeon

Publisher: Keith Strohm
Editor-in-Chief: Erik Mona
Art Director: Sean Glenn
Managing Editor: James Jacobs
Associate Art Director: Mike Schley
Graphic Designer: Sarah Robinson
Editorial Assistant: Jeremy Walker
Advertising Sales Director: Rob Stewart
Production Director: Jeff Alvarez
Prepress Manager: Kelly O'Brien
Circulation Manager: Keith Strohm
For Wizards of the Coast: Rich Redman and Ed Stark

CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS
Attila Adorjany, Joachim Barrum, Peter Bergting, Chad Du Lac, Darlene, Andrew Hou, Kyle Hunter, Robert Lazzaretti, Tony Moseley, Ramon Perez, Steve Prescott, Wayne Reynolds, Stan Shaw, Eva Widermann, Jim Zubkavich

CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS
Alec Austin, Andy Collins, Monte Cook, Chris Fry, Robert J. Kuntz, Erik Mona, Wil Wheaton, James Wyatt

PAIZO PUBLISHING, LLC
2700 Richards Road, Suite 201
Bellevue, WA 98005-4200

Chief Executive Officer: Lisa Stevens
Chief Operating Officer: Keith Strohm
Corporate Accountant: Dave Erickson
Technical Director: Vic Wertz
Director of Operations: Jeff Alvarez
Webmaster: Robert Head

Dungeon July 2005, Volume 19, Number 7 (ISSN# 0890-7102/USPS 0002-005) is published monthly by Paizo Publishing, LLC, 2700 Richards Road, Suite 201, Bellevue, WA 98005-4200, United States of America. Periodicals Postage Paid at Bellevue, WA 98009-9998 and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to Dungeon, Paizo Publishing LLC, 2700 Richards Road, Suite 201, Bellevue, WA 98005-4200.

Ride-Along Enclosed.

No part of this magazine may be reproduced (except for review purposes) without the prior written consent of the publisher. Material published herein does not necessarily reflect the opinions of Paizo Publishing, LLC, its employees, or its editorial staff, who are not liable for opinions expressed herein. Most product names are trademarks owned by the companies that publish those products. Use of the name of any product without mention of trademark status should not be construed as a challenge to such status. Trademarks related to the Dungeons & Dragons brand, including Dragon, Dungeon, and D&D are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. and are used under license from Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a division of Hasbro, Inc.

POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO
Paizo Publishing, 2700 Richards Road, Suite 201,
Bellevue, WA 98005-4200.

©2005 Wizards of the Coast, Inc.

BACK ISSUES: **paizo.com** or call 425-289-1340

SUBSCRIPTIONS/CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Contact Paizo Publishing at **subscriptions@paizo.com** or call 425-289-0060.

Although we accept subscriptions to prison addresses, delivery is subject to the discretion and/or whim of prison personnel. If you have not received a magazine or premium, please consult with your Mail Room authorities. This publisher is not responsible for non-delivery.

ADVERTISING: Contact Dungeon's Advertising Director, Rob Stewart, at (425) 289-1345. All ads are subject to approval by Paizo Publishing, LLC, which reserves the right to reject any ad for any reason. Advertisers and/or agencies of advertisers agree not to hold Paizo Publishing, LLC liable for any loss or expense from alleged wrongdoing that may arise out of the publication of such advertisements.

DISTRIBUTION: National and international distribution is provided by Curtis Circulation Company, 730 River Road, New Milford, NJ 07646. Tel: (201) 634-7400. Fax: (201) 634-7499.

OPEN GAME CONTENT: Unless otherwise noted, this Paizo Publishing, LLC product contains no Open Game Content. No portion of this work may be reproduced in any form without permission. To learn more about the Open Gaming License and the d20 System License, please visit **wizards.com/d20**.

Printed in the U.S.A.

AGE OF WORMS ADVENTURE PATH

14 THE WHISPERING CAIRN
by Erik Mona
A handful of would-be adventurers gathers to explore an ancient tomb, eager to trade their discoveries for a ticket to a better life. What they find within presages the advent of the Age of Worms, an era of darkness, decay, and writhing doom. A D&D adventure for 1st-level characters.

BACKDROP

48 DIAMOND LAKE
by Erik Mona
Kick off *Dungeon*'s new 12-adventure Age of Worms Adventure Path campaign with this overview of Diamond Lake, a run-down mining community nestled in hills laden with the tombs of a dozen lost civilizations. Bonus poster map by Robert Lazzaretti!

ADVENTURES

66 TEMPLE OF THE SCORPION GOD
by James Wyatt and Andy Collins
An insane villain plots ruin deep beneath the city of Sharn. In order to save the city, the PCs must find the one thing that can stop him, an enormous Siberys dragonshard hidden somewhere in the jungles of the lost continent of Xen'drik.

76 CHAMBERS OF ANTIQUITIES
by Robert J. Kuntz
Deep under the ruins of Maure Castle lie the Chambers of Antiquities, vaults designed by ancient wizards to store magic items even they didn't quite understand. A continuation of last year's hit "Maure Castle," "Chambers of Antiquities" is a D&D adventure for 16th-level characters.

ON THE COVER

Wayne Reynolds brings us a masterpiece to kick off the Age of Worms Adventure Path in style.

CARTOONS

47 Mt. Zogon
39 The Portent
120 Downer

COLUMNS

10 Editorial
12 Prison Mail
102 Gamer Guide
112 Dungeoncraft
122 Wil Save

CAMPAIGN WORKBOOK

116 The City
118 The Dungeon

Out of the unimaginable blackness beyond the gangrenous glare of that cold flame, out of the tartarean leagues through which that oily river rolled uncanny, unheard, and unsuspected, there flopped rhythmically a horde of tame, trained, hybrid winged things that no sound eye could ever wholly grasp, or sound brain ever wholly remember. They were not altogether crows, nor moles, nor buzzards, nor ants, nor vampire bats, nor decomposed human beings; but something I cannot and must not recall.

H. P. Lovecraft
"The Festival"

DUNGEON ADVENTURE PLAYER REWARDS!

Take advantage of the RPGA'S Player Rewards program by scoring points with the adventures from this issue of *Dungeon*! Each adventure is worth 2 D&D Player Rewards points, and remains active until 8/28/05.

Drop by www.rpga.com for more details, and use the following adventure codes:

The Whispering Cairn (124WC1DN)
Temple of the Scorpion God (124SE1DN)
Chambers of Antiquities (124CA1DN)

REAPER MINIATURES REAPER MINIATURES RE

AL - Nord's Games - 2000 Riverchase Galleria - Hoover, AL 35244 - Nords-games.com - (205) 980-4353
AZ - Game Depot - 3136 S. McClintock, Suite #11 - Tempe, AZ 85282 - "Meet Arizona's Best Game Store" - (480) 966-4727
CA - Brookhurst Hobbies - 1218 Brookhurst - Garden Grove, CA 92640 - Brookhursthobbies.com - (714) 636-3680
CA - The War House - 630 West Willow Street - Long Beach, CA 90806 - Warhouse.hypermart.net - (562) 424-2180
CA - Adventurer's Guild of Riverside - 3488 Madison Street - Riverside, CA 92506 - (909) 509-8653 Fax - (909) 809-9810
CA - Black Diamond Games - 2469 N. Main Street - Walnut Creek, CA 94596 - Blackdiamondgames.com - (925) 947-0806
CO - Attactix - 15107 E. Hampden - Aurora, CO 80014 - Attactix.com - (303) 899-3349
CO - Complete Games & Hobbies - 326 N Tejon - Colorado Springs, CO 80903 - Gameswithwhim.com - (719) 473-1116
CO - Lance Laser & Rail LTD - 1565 Quail St Suite 15 - Lakewood, CO 80215 - (303) 233-1358
CO - Collector Mania - 17892 Cottonwood - Parker, CO 80134 - Collectormania.com - (303) 766-3630
FL - Book & Game Emp. - 311 NW Racetrack Road - Fort Walton Beach, FL 32547 - Bookandgame.net - (850) 863-7964
FL - Boardwalkania Comics & Games - 10250-11 Atlantic Blvd. - Jacksonville, FL 32225 - Fax (904) 805-9522 - (904) 730-0774
FL - War Dogs Game Center - 2580 Atlantic Blvd. - Jacksonville, FL 32207 - (904) 399-1978
FL - Sunshine Roleplayers - 7921 Bird Rd # 44 - Miami, FL 33155
GA - Tyche's Games - 1056 S. Lumpkin Street - Athens, GA 30605 - Tychesgames.com - (706) 354-4800
GA - The War Room - 2063 F Beaver Run Rd - Norcross, GA 30093 - Thewarroom.com - (770) 729-9588
IA - Acme Comics & Collectibles- 1822 Pierce Street - Sioux City, IA 51105 - Acecm@pionet.net - (712) 258-5171
ID - Dark Horse Games - 2226 W. Main Street - Boise, ID 83702 - (208) 343-5027
IL - Castle Perilous Games - 715 S. University Ave, Suite 203 - Carbondale, IL 62901 - Members.aol.com/cpdisp - (800) 397-2180
IL - Dragon's Sanctum - 3216 Avenue of the Cities - Moline, IL 61265 - (309) 762-5577
IL - Games Plus - 101 West Prospect Ave. - Mt. Prospect, IL 60056 - Games-plus.com - (847) 577-9686
IN - Comic Quest - 2260 Morgan Avenue - Evansville, IN 47711 - Comicquest.com - (812) 474-1017
KS - Table Top Game & Hobby - 7737 Quivera Road - Lenexa, KS 66216 - (913) 962-Game Fax - (913) 962-4263
MD - Walt's Cards - 7520 German Hill Rd - Baltimore, MD 21222 - (410) 288-7044
MD - Games & Comics & Stuff - 7452 Baltimore Annapolis - Glen Burnie, MD 21061 - Gamescomicsstuff.com - (410) 863-7418
MI - Underworld Comics & Games - 1214 S. University - Ann Arbor, MI 48104 - Underworldcomics.com - (734) 998-0647
MI - Hero Quest Comics & Games - 2606 East Grand River Ave - Howell, MI 48843 - Hero_quest@msn.com - (517) 540-9790
MI - Old Guard Hobbies - 35808 Van Dyke - Sterling Heights, MI 48312 - Oldguardhobbies.com - (586) 977-3969
MI - Phoenix Rising Hobbies & Games - 377 Highland Rd - Waterford, MI 48328 - Phhobbies.com - (248) 774-5229
MN - Dreamers Cards - 3008 Texas Avenue South - St. Louis Park, MN 55426 - Nggnet.com/Dreams - (952) 938-8163
MO - Valhalla's Gate - 901 E. Nifong Blvd Ste B - Columbia, MO 65201 - Valhallasgate.com - (573) 442-9909
MO - Underground Games - 1756 Smizer Station Rd - Fenton, MO 63026 - Undergroundgames.net - (636) 529-7900
MO - Changing Hands Book Shop - 529 S. Virginia Ave - Joplin, MO 64801 - Greyfox@joe.net - (417) 623-8899
MO - Gamer's Den - 500 East 5th Street - Washington, MO 63090 - gamerdenonline.com - (636) 239-4429
NC - Fallen Orc Games - 114 Kilmayne Dr - Cary, NC 27511 - Fallenorcgames.com - (919) 388-9799
NJ - Caught YOU Looking! - 1234 Anywhere - Lewisville, NJ 75210 - Reapermini.com - (940) 484-6464
NJ - Fantasci-The Game Shop - 297 Rte 72, Stafford Sq Mall - Manahawkin, NJ 08050 - Fantasci.com - (609) 978-4060
NJ - Caught YOU Looking! - 1234 Anywhere - Lewisville, NJ 75210 - Reapermini.com - (940) 484-6464
NJ - Caught You Looking! - Your Address - Your City, NJ 08533 - Reapergames.com - (940) 484-6464
NJ - Caught YOU Looking! - 1234 Anywhere - Lewisville, NJ 75210 - Reapermini.com - (940) 484-6464
NM - Active Imagination - 11200 Montgomery # 10 - Albuquerque, NM 87111 - (505) 345-2232
NY - Zombie Planet - 1238 Central Avenue - Albany, NY 12205 - Edensstudios.net/zombieplanet - (518) 438-7202
NY - Alsand Toy Soldier Plus - 548 Long Island Ave - Deer Park, NY 11729 - Alsandmdsco.com - (631) 254-2650
NY - Monkey Head Games - 1244 Route 25 - Selden, NY 11784 - Monkeyheadgames.com - (631) 451-7008
NY - Caught YOU Looking! - 1234 Anywhere - Lewisville, NY 75210 - Reapermini.com - (940) 484-6464
OH - Nord's Games - 3001 Colerain Avenue - Cincinnati, OH 45251 - Nords-games.com - (513) 623-4263
OH - Ivory Tower Games - 21 N. Mechanic St - Lebanon, OH 45036 - (513) 228-3948
OH - Caught You Looking! - 1234 Anywhere - Lewisville, OH 75210 - Reapermini.com - (940) 484-6464
OR - Rainy Day Games - 18105 SW TV Highway - Aloha, OR 97006 - Rainy-day-games.com - (503) 643-4100
PA - Gateway Games - 930 W. Erie Plaza - Erie, PA 16505 - (814) 874-3772
PA - Caught You Looking! - Your Address - Your City, PA 16505 - Reapergames.com - (940) 484-6464
PA - The Comic Store - 25 McGovern Ave - Lancaster, PA 17602 - (717) 397-5737
PA - Pastimes on the Square - 1 East Main - Palmyra, PA 17078 - Pastimes.biz - (717) 838-9662
PA - Comic Store West - Maple Village II, 864 Loucks Road - York, PA 17404 - Comicstorewest.com - (717) 845-9188
PA - Caught You Looking! - Your Address - Your City, PA 17404 - Reapermini.com - (940) 484-6464
SC - Borderlands - 1434 Laurens Road, Greenville, SC 29607 - (864) 235-3468

TN - Games Plus - 107 East Main Street, Gallatin, TN 37066 - Gamesplus.org - (615) 451-7715
TN - Caught You Looking! - Your Address, Your City, TN 37066 - Reapergames.com - (940) 484-6464
TN - The Game Keep - 3952 Lebanon Pike - Hermitage, TN 37076 - Thegamekeep.com - (615) 883-4900
TN - Nords Games - Johnson City Mall, 2011 N. Roan Street - Johnson City, TN 37601 - (423) 915-9008
TX - Dibble's Hobbies - 1029 Donaldson Ave - San Antonio, TX 78228 - Dibbles@satx.net - (210) 736-7721
UT - Hastur Games & Hobbies - 6831 S. State ST- Midvale, UT 84047 - (877) Hasturhobbies.com - (801) 352-2605
WI - Chimera Hobby Shop - 700 West Wisconsin Avenue - Appleton, WI 54914 - Chimerahobby.com - (920) 735-1201
WI - Chimera Hobby Shop - 347 West Division Street - Fond Du Lac, WI 54935 - Chimerahobby.com - (920) 923-9339
WI - Gnome Games - 1935 Main Street - Green Bay, WI 54302 - Gnomegames.com - (920) 391-4266
WI - Game Universe - 4631 South 108th St - Greenfield, WI 53228 - Game-universe.com - (414) 427-8800

CANADA

QB - Le Valet D'Coeur - 4409 St. Denise - Montreal, QB H2J 2L1 - (514) 495-0133

Please visit these fine retailers to get your REAPER fix!

MASTER SERIES PAINTS

REAPER

P.O. Box 293175 - Lewisville, TX 75029-3175
(940) 484-6464 - Fax (940) 484-0096
Reapermini.com ReaperGames.com

PRO PAINTS ©TM

REAPER MINIATURES REAPER MINIATURES RE

ER MINIATURES REAPER MINIATURES REAPER

HIPPING MAY 2005 - SHIPPING MAY 2005 - SHIPPING MAY 2005

WARLORD

Legend of the Five Rings AEG

14183: Aysa
Female Ghost

14180: Tharian
Vampire Bloodmage

4439:
Void Guard

4440: Unicorn
clan Warrior

DARK HEAVEN LEGENDS

4441:Wolf
Clan Infantry

2934: Wood Elf King

2933: Talanka, Ogre Shaman

2932: Goblin Barbarian

4442: Lion
Clan Samurai

2941: Ghouls and Ghast

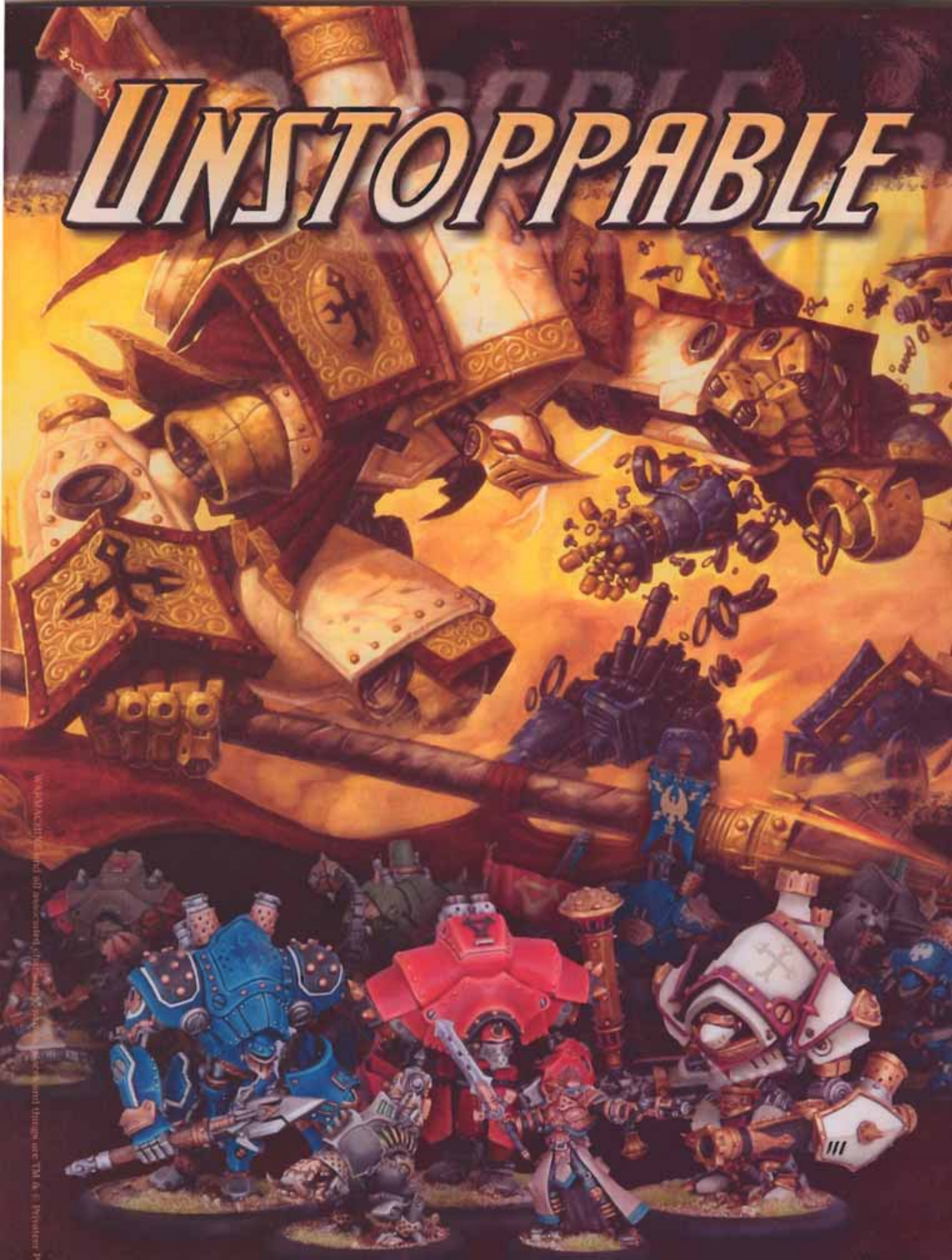
2940: Neanderthal Champion

4443: Wolf
Clan Warrior

ER MINIATURES REAPER MINIATURES REAPER

REAPER MINIATURES REAPE

UNSTOPPABLE



Play your way—make battlegroups with as few as three models, or assemble formidable armies with dozens of troops. Choose your faction from the nations of noble Cygnar, imperialistic Khador, righteous Protectorate, or vile Cryx.

Take control of your army of WARJACKS—ash spewing, steam belching iron giants of destruction!

Commanded by your spell slinging warrior-general, the warcaster, the forces of WARMACHINE set the battlefield ablaze with an arsenal of arcane magics and deadly burning lead.

Victory favors the bold!

SO PLAY LIKE YOU'VE GOT A PAIR.

Winner of three Origins awards including Best Fantasy Miniatures Rules, Best Fantasy Miniatures Series and the Gamers Choice Miniatures Award.

WARMACHINE™

Take your battles to the next level with the WARMACHINE: Prime rulebook. It includes everything you need to command a legion of troops as well as in-depth world background and a modeling guide from the world's top modelers.

Get started fast with only a Battlebox. Each box contains a fully playable and balanced battlegroup and the rules you need to face off against your opponent.

PRIVATEER PRESS

Ask your retailer for a WARMACHINE Battlebox today.

Check out www.privateerpress.com for more information and to find out why thousands of WARMACHINE fans have made it an *UNSTOPPABLE* force in the industry.

THE ADVENTURE BEGINS

In a sullen mining town called Diamond Lake, cultists beholden to the Way of the Ebon Triad walk widdershins around an ancient pool, chanting time-lost rituals to summon a tripartite god. Three days to the south, where the hills meet the fetid shores of a great swamp, a tribe of lizardfolk gathers to raid a human fortress, whipped into frenzy by a zealous black dragon. The hills crawl with undead creatures infested with wriggling green worms. Hulking abominations in the distant Rift Canyon undulate with paroxysms of near-forgotten obedience to a long-absent lord. They sense with excitement the impending return of their wicked sovereign. Kyuss stirs in his prison outside reality. The Age of Worms is at hand.

This issue kicks off the 12-installment Age of Worms Adventure Path, a complete DUNGEONS & DRAGONS campaign that will take your adventurers from the down-and-dirty days of 1st level to the heights of power at 20th. Each monthly installment will feature exciting, challenging adventures from some of the brightest talents in the business. With the help of authors like Wolfgang Baur, Sean K Reynolds, Greg A. Vaughan, Mike Mearls, Jason Bulmahn, Jesse Decker, and Tito Leati you'll take your adventurers to a ghost-haunted jungle city, a blood-soaked gladiatorial arena, and a tyrannical bandit kingdom. In a metropolis of wizards and thieves they'll square off against a mad mind flayer and his doppelganger thralls. Other villains follow—enraged giants, hideous ulgurstasas, the inscrutable avolakias, and of course dragons (sometimes more than one at the same time). In the end, the characters will have averted a major disaster, and the players will have memories they'll cherish forever.

On a personal level, the launch of the Age of Worms Adventure Path signifies the culmination of more than a year's worth of careful scheming and lots of evil giggling on my part. You see, not only am I managing the Age of Worms, but I'm also running it in my own D&D game, which has been going on now for about three months. The adventure and backdrop in this issue reflect the activity of that campaign to date, and set the tone for the rest of the series. After putting so much work into the coordination of this project I decided to take on the first installment myself. I hope you'll find it up with the magazine's usual high standards. Now's the part where I get to sit back and let my favorite game designers write the rest of my campaign for me. And the best part is that they're designing the campaign for you, too.

Shackled City Adventure Path Hardcover

As *DUNGEON* launches its second Adventure Path, Paizo Publishing looks back upon the first with *DUNGEON Classics: The Shackled City Adventure Path*, a 416-page full-color hardcover compilation of the campaign that set the standard for the Age of Worms and beyond. Published between issues #97–116, the Shackled City concerns Cauldron, a treacherous city built into the caldera of a dormant volcano and the machinations that surround it. Adventures by Christopher Perkins, Chris Thomasson, David Noonan, our own James Jacobs, and more present a complete campaign involving demodands, mischievous cults, and an insane demon prince.

Complete with a giant two-sided poster map, a 24-page removable map booklet, new illustrations, and a never-before-seen "lost" installment by Christopher Perkins, *The Shackled City Adventure Path* has a retail price of $59.95, and is available in July at your favorite local game retailer or online at Paizo.com.

Whether you're setting out for the city of Cauldron and the dangers of the Shackled City or are hunkering down in Diamond Lake for the onset of the Age of Worms, we're glad to have you. The adventure is very definitely about to begin, and I know I'd rather be nowhere else.

You're on first watch.

ERIK

Erik Mona
Editor-in-Chief
erikm@paizo.com

Up until now, the West just hasn't been wild enough.

Mad Hermit Games proudly presents

Cold Steel Reign

A Fantasy Wild West Roleplaying Game

Debuting at Origins, 2005

www.ColdSteelReign.com

COLD STEEL REIGN

MAD HERMIT GAMES

Tell us what you think of this issue.
Write to: Prison Mail, Paizo Publishing, 2700 Richards Road, Suite 201, Bellevue, WA 98005-4200 or send an email to dungeon@paizo.com.

Check out the *Dungeon* messageboards at paizo.com/dungeon

Prison Mail

Dungeon #121

It's hard to believe that we published the final installment of the massive four-part World of Greyhawk map in *Dungeon* #121. Reader response was enormous, and we're sure to do another big poster some time in the future. Thanks to everyone who sent in words of encouragement and criticism.

April's cover featured two stalwart NPCs from the rich history of the Dungeons & Dragons game—the demon prince Graz'zt and the witch queen Iggwilv—in a stunning cover by fan-favorite artist Wayne Reynolds. Iggwilv's essays on the demon lords and princes of the Great Wheel cosmology currently appear as an infrequent series in the pages of *Dragon* magazine. Both Graz'zt and Iggwilv will return to the pages of *Dungeon* before the year is out.

"Fiend's Embrace," a low-level adventure by Stephen S. Greer, explored elements of Iggwilv and Graz'zt's romance, and received accolades from many readers. Skip Williams dropped by with "Secrets of the Arch Wood," a Forgotten Realms adventure set in the popular Dalelands region, and Richard Pett brought us "The Styes," a China Miéville-inspired horror scenario that promises to live long in the memory.

Back issues of *Dungeon* #121 and dozens of other great issues are still available at paizo.com.

Maybe it was Rice...

First, I subscribe to both *Dungeon* and *Dragon*, and they're both great.

However, I really disliked the picture of Mr. Dory on p. 52 of *Dungeon* 121. I don't like seeing maggots coming out of people's mouths; I find it kind of excessively disgusting.

Tom Craven
Via Email

And here I thought it was uproariously funny. Sorry to offend you, Tom!

More Joachim to Come

Many thanks to *Dungeon* for including the art of Joachim Barrum for "The Styes" in issue #121. Although all of the art that the art directors select is top rate, Joachim's work evoked a sense of realism that I particularly enjoy. The effects of lighting, slightly blurred details and muted colors minimized any sense of "cartoonishness" that can creep into a fantasy work when these things are rendered too crisply or vividly. On the other hand, Joachim's paintings don't go in other direction often traveled by fantasy artists of images that are too highly stylized, with exaggerated proportions and stark line contrast typical of graphic arts as opposed to fine arts.

Lyon Virostko
Billings, Montana

Yeah, we like him too. We've asked Joachim Barrum (and Steve Prescott, and Eva Widermann) to provide art for all of the Age of Worms Adventure Path adventures, so look for more great things in the future. You can start with Joachim's wonderful full-page opener for "The Whispering Cairn," on page 14.

No Ads = No Mag

I have noticed that advertisements have grown in *Dungeon* magazine, and for this specific issue, it saddens me. This issue touts "Rediscover the Forgotten Realms" and yet I found much more non-Forgotten Realms and two times more advertising than Forgotten Realms content. I am a huge fan of the Forgotten Realms and this issue with its alluring subtitle on the cover turned out to be a major let down. I feel the cover statement misrepresented the content and I didn't get my money's worth—$7 for 14 pages out of 106 is not cost effective. Since it is wrapped in plastic, I could not view the content before purchase. If I had, I would not have bought it. I feel as though I am a victim of false advertising. If you are going to use a subtitle on a cover to push an issue of a specific world or flavor, it would be nice to have most of the content centered on that subject. Would you continue to buy a magazine matching your interests after finding that only 1/7 the content suites your interest or delivers what the cover suggests? Guess I can't judge this magazine by its cover. Therefore, I will no longer purchase unless I can review the content first. Another reason why I don't subscribe to this one, *Dragon* is a much better value in comparison.

Marc Graff
Via Email

Sorry you feel that way, Marc. Coverlines are a necessary evil in the modern publishing world. If Cosmopolitan *promises "10 Hot Tips to Satisfy Your Lover," do you assume that each tip will fill 10% of the issue? I hope not (actually, I hope you don't read* Cosmopolitan*, but that's a different issue altogether). I likewise hope that no one thinks the coverlines on our covers apply to all of the content within the magazine. Bagging the issues is, unfortunately, a necessity when we throw in a poster map, so the problem's not going to go away.*

On the other hand, I do have some news I think will make you and other fans of the Forgotten Realms very happy. Check out Dungeon *#126 for the start of a three-part Forgotten Realms Campaign Arc, the "Dungeon of the Crypt," by Eric L. Boyd. You'll also want to hunt down* Dragon *#334, where we'll launch a new Ed Greenwood column on the cities of the Forgotten Realms, and* Dragon *#335, where we'll celebrate the 20th anniversary of Waterdeep, City of Splendors. Then check the letter columns a few months later to see*

readers complaining about us running too much FORGOTTEN REALMS *stuff. Such is the life of the official D&D magazines.*

Love them Dalelands

I wanted to say how much I have enjoyed Skip Williams' Dalelands trilogy.

In DUNGEON #87, "The Raiders of Galath's Roost" is a great two-part introductory adventure to the Realms. It is very difficult to come up with a wide variety of CR 1 encounters to challenge a 1st-level party while maintaining a plausible story line, but Skip does a great job with Galath's Roost. Likewise, the Raiders' Citadel is a great dungeon crawl with a well-plotted story that remains reasonable for low-level characters. My only nit with this adventure is that I wish it had been more consistent with the original Realmslore for Galath's Roost in *Volo's Guide to the Dalelands*.

In DUNGEON #100, "Woe to Mistledale" is an excellent example of a mid-level adventure. I particularly liked how Skip demonstrated the conflict between competing power groups that so characterizes the FORGOTTEN REALMS and introduced recurring villains to bedevil the PCs. Skip also shows a different style of adventure, by using scenes that can be played in any order, rather than a traditional dungeon crawl.

In DUNGEON #121's "Secrets of the Arch Wood," Skip picks up on a storyline that began in *Volo's Guide to the Dalelands* and turned mysterious in the FORGOTTEN REALMS *Campaign Setting*. I particularly liked the fact that that Skip illustrated the complicated history of some elven families who can trace their roots back to old Cormanthor, with some branches of the family turning to evil, while others make the ultimate sacrifice by becoming a baelnorn to atone for the sins of their kin. I do hope that in future FR adventures involving elves descended from the Fair Folk of Old Cormanthor (by Skip or other authors), we find out more about other scions of the Keleidsa clan. My only nit with this adventure was that it seemed to violate the third edition maxim that "anything the NPCs can do, the PCs can do too." I wish it had been explained how Quamara transformed herself into a half-dragon... perhaps by taking 10 levels of dragon disciple or something along those lines.

All in all, these three adventures, taken together, do a great job illustrating low, mid, and high-level play in the Realms. I particularly like how Skip has taken little one-paragraph or one-sentence adventure hooks from the FORGOTTEN REALMS *Campaign Setting* and built them into real adventures. I really hope more would-be contributors to DUNGEON are inspired to find such hooks in the FORGOTTEN REALMS *Campaign Setting* or other FORGOTTEN REALMS books and build them up as well.

Kudos to Skip and the DUNGEON editors.

Eric L. Boyd
Via Email

Sty-riffic!

After grilling you folks pretty relentlessly on the DUNGEON message board recently for not sporting a wide enough variety of adventure types, I just wanted to drop you a line to praise "The Styes" in issue #121. Richard Pett turned in a splendid example of an open-ended, investigation-based horror adventure with oodles of creepy NPCs and some truly disturbing imagery. A slam dunk all the way! It's great to know that the Paizo crew is open to the possibility of printing more than just linear "search-and-destroy" dungeon crawls. I'm looking forward to more in the future!

Will Mistretta
Everett, Washington

Thanks for the kind words (and the online grilling), Will. We try to include a wide variety of adventure types, but we admit to a special fondness for the good old dungeon crawl. Check out this issue's "The Whispering Cairn" (by a hack author we'll no longer work with, I might add) for an approach that tries to make a dungeon crawl a little less linear. Please let us know if we managed to hit the mark.—Erik Mona

GETTING IN TOUCH WITH DUNGEON

Subscriptions: Direct change of address and other subscription inquiries to Paizo Customer Service at subscriptions@paizo.com or call (425)289-0060. Or write to us at Subscription Department, Paizo Publishing, 2700 Richards Road, Ste 201, Bellevue WA 98005-4200.

Back Issues: Missed an important issue? Visit paizo.com/backissues, email backissues@paizo.com, or write to us at Back Issues, Paizo Publishing, 2700 Richards Road, Ste 201, Bellevue WA 98005-4200.

Letters to the Editor: Email to dungeon@paizo.com or mail to Prison Mail, Paizo Publishing, 2700 Richards Road, Ste 201, Bellevue WA 98005-4200. Letters may be edited for space and clarity.

Submissions: Interested in writing for the magazine? Download our submission guidelines by visiting the Dungeon homepage at paizo.com/dungeon.

Next Month in Dungeon

Dungeon #125

The Three Faces of Evil

By Mike Mearls

Clues discovered in Diamond Lake lead to the Black Cathedral, a forlorn chamber hidden below a local mine. There they battle the machinations of the Ebon Triad, a cult dedicated to three vile gods. What does the Ebon Triad know about the Age of Worms, and why are they so desperate to get it started? An Age of Worms Adventure Path scenario for 3rd-level characters.

Backdrop: Denizens of Diamond Lake

Wondering who's the best liar in Diamond Lake? Did your PCs pick a fight with Kurlag the half-ogre? Need to convert the Age of Worms to the FORGOTTEN REALMS or EBERRON? Looking for wandering monsters for the hills surrounding town? This article has all the crunch you'll need to run adventures based in Diamond Lake.

Pit of the Fire Lord

By Andy Collins and James Wyatt

A madman hidden deep below Sharn plans to tear open a portal to the Sea of Fire. Can a band of heroes reach him in time to save the city from conflagration? "Pit of the Fire Lord" is part three of the three-part "Shards of Eberron" Campaign Arc. An EBERRON adventure for 6th-level characters.

Seekers of the Silver Forge

By Tim Hitchcock

Strange things have long plagued fishermen's nets—but none so strange as rotting fish that twitch and gasp for days after taken from the water, or a gilled githyanki's severed head found in a shark's belly. Do these briny omens lend credence to rumors of a sunken githyanki city caught in a necromantic civil war? Find out in this D&D adventure for 15th-level characters.

Joachim

AGE OF WORMS
THE WHISPERING CAIRN

Since the beginning of history, humanity has measured time in Ages. Ages of Glory, of Dreams, and even of Great Sorrows mark the human tally of years, giving a sense of order to the events of past centuries. But one age has yet to occur—an age of darkness, of decay, and of writhing doom. Witty bards and wrathful preachers know it as the Age of Worms, weaving it into the peripheries of their passion plays as a mythic era of destruction that could begin at any time. Astrologers, diviners, and the servants of Fate know more. The canniest among them fear that the Age of Worms has already begun.

"The Whispering Cairn" is a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS adventure designed for four 1st-level characters. Characters will advance to 3rd level by the end of the adventure. This is the first installment in the Age of Worms Adventure Path, a complete campaign consisting of 12 adventures, several "Backdrop" articles to help Dungeon Masters run the series, and a handful of poster maps of key locations, all published over the course of the next year in *DUNGEON* magazine.

The campaign will take characters from the humble beginnings of 1st level to the mighty responsibilities of 20th. The format of the campaign is episodic, with individual chapters able to stand alone despite a "plot" that runs through the entire series. The full scope of this plot will become clear as each installment appears, but we'll periodically provide updates and sneak previews of upcoming installments to help you plan ahead and get the creative ball rolling. The first such update, "The Road Ahead," appears in *DUNGEON* #125.

BY ERIK MONA
BY JOACHIM BARRUM, STEVE PRESCOTT, AND EVA WIDERMANN
BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI
AGE OF WORMS CALLIGRAPHY BY DARLENE
ADVENTURE PATH, LOW-LEVEL (1ST–5TH), DUNGEON CRAWL

Campaign Setting

The Age of Worms Adventure Path has been designed with maximum flexibility in mind. The "world" behind the adventures is consistent with that implied by the core rules of DUNGEONS & DRAGONS. The towns and cities of the Adventure Path host churches to St. Cuthbert and Heironeous, but these and other faiths important to the series can be easily substituted with religions from EBERRON or the FORGOTTEN REALMS, as well as with clergies of the DM's own design. The "setting" of the Adventure Path is designed as a framework, not as a muzzle on the DM's creativity. The series will remain tightly focused on the "milestone" locations necessary to run the ongoing campaign. If you want to run the campaign in EBERRON or the FORGOTTEN REALMS, there's nothing stopping you. In fact, we'll even help out with substantial adaptation appendices for each adventure by Keith Baker (EBERRON's creator) and Eric L. Boyd (*Faiths & Pantheons, Serpent Kingdoms, City of Splendors: Waterdeep*). Greyhawk fans will find much to like in the Adventure Path's use of the core D&D setting. You can find these appendices in the *DUNGEON* #124 Online Supplement, currently available at paizo.com/dungeon.

Preparation

To play the Age of Worms Adventure Path, you will need a copy of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS core rulebooks (the *Player's Handbook*, *DUNGEON MASTER's Guide*, and *Monster Manual*). Most of the monsters encountered in this and the adventures to come will be drawn from the *Monster Manual*, but we'll occasionally use creatures from other sources. When we do, we'll be sure to include all of the important information here in the magazine, but you'll probably find it helpful to have copies of the *Monster Manual 2*, *Monster Manual 3*, and *Fiend Folio* to fill in the details and to populate "off map" areas.

The action in the first few adventures takes place near the town of Diamond Lake, a corrupt mining community three days' ride from the fabulous Free City, metropolis of wizards and thieves. Before you begin this adventure, take a moment to unfold the map we've provided in this issue and take in the major set piece for the first arc of the campaign. Think about how to make the town of Diamond Lake *your* town. What creatures dwell in the hills surrounding Diamond Lake? What treasures lie at the bottom of the lake itself?

Then turn to the "Backdrop: Diamond Lake" article on page 48 and discover Diamond Lake's history and dangers. Pay particular attention to the Adventure Hooks section, which offers tips on how to get each player character involved in the story. The Backdrop article helps with the most important elements you'll need to make Diamond Lake come alive, but filling in the blanks yourself is the real fun of D&D.

Throughout the campaign, Campaign Seed sidebars will preview future Age of Worms installments. These sidebars offer glimpses into the future, and keep you updated on the most important NPCs and events of the campaign as they are introduced. During the course of the campaign, you'll need to keep plenty of secrets from your players, but we don't intend to keep any secrets from you.

ACT ONE: THE WHISPERING CAIRN

This adventure assumes that the PCs begin their adventuring careers in the lively mining town of Diamond Lake, a muddy smudge on the map of the hills east of the fabulous Free City. Diamond Lake's inhabitants are predominately miners and laborers, serious folk who spend most of their lives toiling below ground. When not working, the miners celebrate along the Vein, a seedy road lined with alehouses and brothels. Overall, the village is a sooty, sullen place prone to unpleasant bursts of violence and passion. But Diamond Lake holds plenty of opportunities for adventure, for the uplands surrounding the town are rife with the ancient tombs and burial cairns of long-dead cultures.

Idle chatter around the village speaks of a trio of richly dressed adventurers who frequent the taproom of the Feral Dog, Diamond Lake's most notorious tavern. The confident heroes of the Free City spoke of hard-won battles on their journey to Diamond Lake, and of their intention to explore the long-abandoned Stirgenest Cairn on the lake's distant southeastern shore. The PCs, being natives of Diamond Lake, know that cairn is oft explored by the community's youth, who always find it completely empty of marvels and perfectly harmless.

Not so another cairn within a day's ride of the village. This cairn lies near an iron mine that went dry about 50 years ago. The mine's charter lapsed when its manager died a few years later. Situated in a sort of no-man's land, the cairn was all but forgotten, its yawning entrance overgrown with weeds and choked with debris. Rediscovered by a curious teenager a decade ago, the cairn has since been a sort of community secret held by Diamond Lake's youth, who dare each other to disappear into its cyclopean entrance to prove their bravery. Occasionally, when the wind is just right, haunting, almost magical tones emerge from the depths of the forlorn tomb. Those who know of its location call it the Whispering Cairn.

If adventurers from the Free City expect to discover hidden passages and riches within the Stirgenest Cairn, it stands to reason that the Whispering Cairn might also hold a genuine opportunity for profit. In the rough-and-tumble mining village of Diamond Lake, where desperate folk slave in dank tunnels to profit wealthy masters, an opportunity for profit is an opportunity to escape.

History of the Whispering Cairn

Many thousands of years ago, long before the rise of human civilization, two ancient powers struggled to determine the fate of the still-forming multiverse. On one side was a primal being called the Queen of Chaos, a tentacled horror from an age before ages. Against her stood the rigid legions of the Wind Dukes of

Aaqa, the most cultured of the elemental lords who ruled before the birth of the living races, and who yet controlled an empire that spanned worlds. Centuries of stalemate collapsed when the Queen of Chaos recruited her most potent ally, a ruthless Prince of Demons named Miska the Wolf-Spider.

Miska and his demonic legions laid siege to the Wind Dukes' territory, routing the elemental armies and snuffing out the culture of Aaqa one world at a time. When all seemed lost, a consortium of seven great Wind Duke warriors withdrew from the conflict and developed a plan to destroy Miska the Wolf-Spider and break the back of the Chaos army. An epic quest ensued, in which these "Wandering Dukes" scoured the Great Wheel for a weapon or secret that would undo their hated foe. Drawing upon the lore of a hundred cultures, they constructed one of the most potent artifacts in history—the fabled *Rod of Law*.

They returned to the war at a pivotal battle on the volcanic fields of Pesh. There, the greatest of the Wandering Dukes plunged the *Rod* into Miska the Wolf-Spider. When the absolute law of the *Rod* mixed with the chaos of Miska's blood, a great planar rift erupted, shattering the *Rod* into seven pieces. The Prince of Demons and the Wandering Duke vanished into that rift, while the seven parts of the *Rod* were scattered across the land.

Hundreds of Wind Dukes remained at Pesh, many dead or dying from wounds sustained in the tumultuous final battle. By ancient tradition, these soldiers would be buried on the world where they died, their elaborate tombs forever recalling the brave sacrifice of the heroes of Aaqa and serving as testament to the reach of their moribund empire. The Wind Dukes ranged south from Pesh, across an immense lake to a craggy region perfect for the task. Thus were the first tombs built in the hills surrounding Diamond Lake.

The greatest of these tombs honored Icosiol, a Wandering Duke slain by Miska the Wolf-Spider in the final cataclysmic conflict between Law and Chaos. Others contained Icosiol's fallen servants and sub-chiefs, each with its own treasures and stories to tell. One of these smaller tombs held the corpse of Zosiel, a warrior prince who fell to a demon's blow shortly before the Wandering Dukes employed the *Rod of Law* to banish Miska from the world. This is the Whispering Cairn.

In the millennia since its construction, the Whispering Cairn hosted countless visitors. They first made off with the most attainable of the tomb's treasures, statuettes of peerless sculpt, platinum canisters of priceless incense, and a hundred harder to describe baubles of unquestionable value. No few explorers fell victim to the ingenious traps of the tomb's chief architect, a noble Wind Duke named Nadroc. Only a few explorers discovered that most of the cairn was but a ruse meant to distract from a still greater tomb filled with even deadlier menaces. Even thousands of years after its construction, the Whispering Cairn yet holds unplundered mysteries from the days of its creation.

The last notable expedition to the Whispering Cairn occurred nearly 60 years ago, led by an unscrupulous archeologist called Ulavant. The reprobate scholar had the backing of the Seekers, an order of like-minded academics and adventurers. The affair ended in tragedy, with all hands lost to Nadroc's insidious traps. These days, only footnotes in musty tomes in the Seeker Lodge of the Free City record the fate of Ulavant's band.

About 30 years ago, a young runaway named Alastor Land came to the Whispering Cairn, desperate to escape his uncaring family. Light enough to prance over pressure plates and lucky enough to avoid the tomb's sentient guardians, Alastor penetrated farther into the cairn than most skilled explorers. But even the luck of youth was no match for Nadroc's keen intellect and cunning protections. Consumed by hate at the time of his death, Alastor lives on as a ghost, and still haunts the most secret chambers of the Whispering Cairn.

These days, the youth of Diamond Lake hold the location of the Whispering Cairn like a shibboleth. They dare each other to spend a night within its depths, using the place as a test of mettle. These visits tapered off about six years ago, when a local girl vanished while sleeping in the cairn, devoured by a snake that has since left for more fertile hunting grounds. But still the children come, to marvel at the tomb's uncanny sounds and to carve their names upon the entry walls, their shaking hands etching proof of their courage upon the ancient stone.

Now others come to the Whispering Cairn for reasons of their own, brave strangers who will risk death in search of ancient wealth. But the greatest treasure they will take from this place is each other.

Adventure Synopsis

The bulk of the adventure involves the exploration of the Whispering Cairn, a sizable dungeon complex loaded with ancient traps and a collection of interesting (and territorial) inhabitants. Deep within the complex, the PCs come across the ghost of Alastor Land, the runaway child who fell victim to one of the cairn's traps 30 years ago. The undead horror blocks the PCs' progress, promising to

Campaign Seed: The Rod of Seven Parts

Given the history of the Whispering Cairn, it would be easy to assume that the Age of Worms Adventure Path is centered around a quest for the *Rod of Seven Parts*. In fact, while a few installments of the series (including this one) would make ideal lead-in adventures to a *Rod of Seven Parts*-focused campaign, the *Rod* itself is incidental to the affairs that are about to change your PCs' lives forever.

Portentous times are in store for your player characters and the world they inhabit. At the turning points of history, great and potent artifacts have a way of turning up, as if aching to be used to make an impact upon the world.

The *Rod of Seven Parts* plays a minor role in the unfolding story to come. The major roles will be played by your player characters.

abandon the cairn if the characters return his bones to the small family cemetery on a farmstead just outside town.

This farmstead is now an overgrown ruin inhabited by a nasty owlbear. The party's plans to return Alastor's bones are upset when they discover that the other graves in the family plot have been emptied. To appease the ghost, the party must track down Alastor's relatives, now used as guardian skeletons by an unusual necromancer who has recently arrived in town. Correspondence discovered at the necromancer's home reveals that the villains are preparing for a coming event known as the Age of Worms. The letter also refers to a secret cult hidden in a nearby mine, and implicates one of Diamond Lake's mine managers in cult-related activity.

The PCs return to the Whispering Cairn, where they explore the ruins beyond the blocked door to discover an unplundered tomb protected by hostile creatures of elemental air. At last, the PCs reach the tomb of the Wind Duke Zosiel and discover a treasure that may prove decisive in thwarting the advent of the Age of Worms. The secrets behind this strange cache are revealed in the next installment of the Age of Worms Adventure Path.

PRELUDE

The "Backdrop: Diamond Lake" article following this adventure provides several suggestions to help you get the player characters involved in the action, but there's still one critical element that has yet to be discussed: the campaign's opening scene.

The trio of Free City adventurers in town have spoken openly of their intent to raid the empty Stirgenest Cairn for at least a week, giving plenty of opportunity for word of their exploits to spread to all corners of Diamond Lake. Consider making one or two PCs the instigators for the plot. If you choose the PCs with the strongest need to get out of Diamond Lake, you'll find that the players help you move things along quite nicely. Characters who work for Diamond Lake's notorious Emporium make the best instigators, as they're the most likely to hear gossip and the most likely to want to leave the town as soon as possible, thanks to the squalid conditions of their workplace.

Before play begins, consider how each character comes across information about the the Whispering Cairn. At the request of the plot's instigator, PCs whose backgrounds tie them to the Diamond Lake garrison might raid the office of the garrison's chief cartographer, making off with a 70-year-old map of the now-abandoned mine plot that clearly marks the cairn's entrance, complete with the words "Whispering Cairn" written nearby. More recent maps lack this crucial point of interest.

Since the trip from the village to the cairn requires some overland travel through the hills, a smart character might recruit a ranger, druid, or barbarian from the Bronzewood Lodge, just outside of town. Few indeed are the wizards and sorcerers who wouldn't salivate at the thought of discovering lost arcane lore, so working in arcane spellcasters shouldn't be too much of a problem.

If the plot instigators each invite one PC, that brings the group to the standard size of four adventurers. In the likely event that you must account for more than four players, consider having the plot instigators each invite one character, who might himself invite another character unknown to the instigators. This infuses a current of uncertainty into the opening encounter, giving the players a hook upon which to begin roleplaying and introducing themselves to one another.

Before you begin the campaign, work with your players to get a sense of who their characters will be. Ask them what they're doing in Diamond Lake, and why their characters might be interested in getting out of town. It shouldn't be difficult to come up with such a reason—as the Diamond Lake backdrop and future installments of the Age of Worms Adventure Path will make clear, Diamond Lake isn't exactly home sweet home.

Once you've gotten this information from your players, provide each of them with a printed background that weaves their ideas into your vision of Diamond Lake. End the notes with a suggestion that a friend or acquaintance has set up a meeting in an abandoned mine overseer's office about an hour outside town. Then, when play begins, introduce the players one by one to the office, and let the PCs get to know each other before they set off for a life of adventure.

This office provides an excellent "home base" for the PCs to use during their exploration of the cairn. Anything valuable has been removed decades ago, but the crumbling, abandoned place still provides a stable roof

Campaign Seed: The Free City

Details regarding the "Free City" have been left intentionally vague, to help you place "The Whispering Cairn" anywhere in your favorite campaign setting. In the FORGOTTEN REALMS, the Free City is Waterdeep, City of Splendors. In EBERRON, it is none other than Sharn, City of Towers, which is fully detailed in a product of the same name. Those looking to infuse more GREYHAWK into the core framework provided here will find that the Free City of Greyhawk functions as an ideal candidate. Of course, the Free City might be a city of your own invention, helping the Age of Worms slip seamlessly into your existing campaign setting.

Future installments of the Age of Worms Adventure Path take the PCs to this fabulous city, but for now it remains on the horizon, a great and bustling community packed with danger and excitement.

Try to avoid tying the origins of your PCs to the Free City, as the campaign is meant to unfold the world a little bit at a time. Encourage PCs that grew up in Diamond Lake, but if the character concept is too unusual for the mining town, the Free City makes an appropriate option. The place is a crossroads of countless cultures, where nearly anything is possible.

(despite a collapsed second floor) that can protect the PCs from the ravages of nature.

An article on this office appears in Dragon #333, available at fine hobby shops or online at **paizo.com**. The article is geared toward players, and gives them a map of the place and some suggestions for making it their hideout. While it's not necessary to run this adventure, you may find it helpful to hunt down a copy.

PART ONE: A FACE IN DARKNESS

The yawning entrance to the Whispering Cairn lies about 10 minutes east of the abandoned mine office, a wide monolith-lined portal partially obscured by underbrush and boulders. Assuming the PCs have a general idea of where to look, discovering the entrance requires a DC 10 Search check. Unless the PCs spend 10 minutes working to clear the brush and assorted debris from around the entrance, treat the squares leading from the hillside to area 1 as difficult terrain.

Unless otherwise noted, interior passages are 20 feet wide and 20 feet tall, with ceilings of smooth stone.

1. Coward's Rest

Natural light dimly illuminates a long hallway extending north into darkness. A faint breeze brings with it sibilant whispers that sound almost like sighing breath. It must be a trick of the wind, but the effect is almost lifelike.

The walls bear horizontal bands of deceptively simple geometric patterns at waist level. In places the bands reveal startling detail, but in others the walls look as though they have been hacked apart with weapons or eroded by the rigors of time. Flakes of ancient paint, brilliant purple and a dull mustard hue, still cling to the walls in places, hinting at what must once have been a riot of color. A thin coat of dust coats the floor.

Just inside the darkened tomb, the hallway branches into shallow alcoves to the east and west. Here the walls bear the most significant damage. Dozens of clumsy etchings mar the beautiful ancient masonry like graffiti on a city wall. A clump of soiled cloth about the size of a halfling rests in the rounded terminus of the western alcove.

Outside, the wind picks up, and a chorus of almost human sounds rises from the darkened hall.

In ancient days, these alcoves held great incense braziers mounted upon marble columns. Looters plundered these priceless artifacts centuries ago, leaving only four small anchoring holes along the periphery of a circular depression an inch deep and 2 feet wide.

A fine layer of dust coats the hall's first 60 feet. A character with Track can make a DC 14 Survival check to notice that several wolves have crossed the dusty hallway numerous times in the recent past.

The western alcove contains a moldy old bedroll used by a local teenager daring to spend an evening in the cairn. Any PC native of Diamond Lake under the age of 20 can make a DC 15 Knowledge

got riddles?

An ebon spirit rises high
Child of air and fire.
Born in death yet borne by wind
It flies but does not tire.

It takes your life without a wound
Of that you can be sure
And though it claws into your eyes
It too may also cure.

Get the answer and more riddles at:
www.cloudkingdom.com/Dungeon

Cloud Kingdom Games

got riddle rooms?

Illustrated encounters constructed around riddles and puzzles that you can easily add to any adventure.

got puzzles?

Shadowman has compiled a book of his favorite rooms for you to drop into your game. And he doesn't call them killer puzzles for nothing!

got riddle books?

Add riddles to your campaign or just challenge yourself, your friends and family.

(local) check to remember childhood stories about a teenage girl who went missing 6 years ago. Add a +1 bonus to the check for every year that the character is younger than 20.

The bedroll has hardened and become brittle with age, and cracks if examined too roughly. It contains nothing of value. A DC 15 Search check turns up whittling shavings around the bedroll.

A DC 10 Search check by any character examining the patterned bands upon the walls reveals thin hollow tubes hidden within the patternwork. The strange whispers filling the hall seem to emit from these holes. The tubes extend to the surface of the mound above the cairn, where hundreds of tiny holes catch the wind and project it into the tomb. The outdoor holes are well hidden (and many of them have been covered over and filled with debris), requiring a DC 20 Search check to discover them.

The patterned bands bisect the walls all the way to area 4, where more intricate frescoes replace them.

Every three rounds, allow the PCs a DC 10 Spot check to notice a faint flickering green light coming from the north. This DC decreases by 5 halfway down the passage, and the light becomes obvious by the time the PCs reach area 4. The light comes from a guttering everburning torch in area 7.

2. Transport Alcove

The western hall extends perhaps forty feet, ending at a small marble platform raised about six inches off the floor. A strange, shattered arcane apparatus rests upon this platform, its curved ovular frame giving the appearance of a noble's dressing mirror. Only a third of this frame remains. An unusual arcane glyph about the size of a man's head has been delicately carved into the baseplate of the support platform.

A DC 5 Search check turns up a few shards of an unidentifiable shiny black substance that feels like stone. It is slightly cold to the touch. Anyone inspecting the frame can make a DC 10 Search check to discover numerous runes and glyphs carved into a slot on the inside of the frame, where the "mirror's" glass would have been held. These can be identified as arcane symbols signifying transportation with a successful DC 10 Knowledge (arcana) check.

In ancient days, a grand ring of portals connected several Wind Duke burial cairns, but now only two such portals still function, the one in area 3 and its partner in the undisturbed cairn of Icosiol, the slain Wandering Duke whose grand tomb served as the main stop along the circle of black glass gates. The base of the apparatus bears Icosiol's personal sigil, which has been all but forgotten by history. See the Glyphs of the Wind Dukes sidebar on page 21 for more information

Campaign Seed: Wind Duke Glyphs

As they explore the Whispering Cairn, the PCs encounter glyphs inscribed thousands ago by the Wind Dukes of Aaqa. These are the personal symbols of the general Icosiol (found on the base of the apparatus in area **2** and the frescoes in area **24**), the hero Zosiel (on the sarcophagi in areas **7** and **25**), and the architect Nadroc (found throughout the Architect's Lair). While the legend of the *Rod of Seven Parts* is common currency among bards and dreamers, few specific details regarding Wind Duke culture, history, and writing remain. Their personal glyphs are thought to be the original written form of Auran, before the language of elemental air came to be represented by Draconic letterforms thousands of years ago.

Comprehend languages and Decipher Script checks reveal that the symbols are personal seals, and produce the name associated with each glyph (but not the significance of that name). Use the following chart to adjudicate any bardic knowledge, Knowledge (history), or Knowledge (arcana) checks regarding the glyphs.

Knowledge DC	Information Known
10	The glyphs don't seem to be formed from a common alphabet, although they are reminiscent of arcane symbols representing elemental air.
15	The glyphs represent names, with each referring to a single individual. The glyph on the arcane apparatus at area **2** probably represents the seal of the most important or highest-ranking of the three found in the Whispering Cairn. The glyph on the sarcophagi is the lowest-ranking of the three.
20	The letterforms look similar to an ancient glyph-language called Vaati, which some unorthodox scholars consider the original written form of Auran.
25	Vaati is an Auran word meaning "Wind Duke," and refers to the legendary Wind Dukes of Aaqa who forged the *Rod of Seven Parts*. A book called the *Chronicle of Chan*, falsely attributed to a princess of elemental air, records a full roster of the Wind Dukes present at the Battle of Pesh and a general record of what took place there. (Allustan can requisition the book from the Free City's Great Library in a week's time.)

on how the PCs can learn more about the strange symbol.

Treasure: The shards of glass might fetch as much as 20 gp from the right buyer. In Diamond Lake, that means the gnome jeweler Tidwoad or the magician Allustan.

Development: If the PCs make too much noise in this area, they may be detected by the wolves in area **4**. Each of the three wolves has a –2 modifier on its Listen check due to distance. The DC for this check varies depending upon the PCs volume, ranging from 0 to 10.

Every three rounds, allow the PCs a Spot check (DC 10) to notice a faint flickering green light coming from the north (area **7G**).

3. Collapsed Passage

Fifteen feet down the east passage, a huge pile of collapsed rubble blocks the alcove from top to bottom. It looks like it would take weeks to tunnel through the densely packed debris.

There's a functioning portal beyond this collapsed passage, but there is no way for the PCs to reach it now. This portal comes into play in a future Age of Worms Adventure Path installment.

Development: If the PCs make too much noise in this area, there is a chance the wolves in area **4** hear them. Each of the three wolves has a –2 modifier on its Listen check due to distance. The DC for this check varies depending upon the PCs' volume, ranging from 0 to 10.

Every three rounds, allow the PCs a DC 10 Spot check to notice a faint flickering green light coming from the north (area **7G**).

4. Hall of Honor (EL 3)

The central hallway opens into a large chamber with wings leading to the east and west. Across the chamber to the north yawns a twenty-foot-wide open arch draped from top to bottom in translucent cobwebs. An eerie green light flickers from beyond the webs, casting strange shadows about this room. The place smells of animal spoor and wet fur.

To the west, three short stairs lead to a wide marble dais, but the far end of the wing is obscured by darkness.

Huge slabs of cracked masonry and irregular piles of scattered debris choke the eastern wing, giving the appearance of complete collapse.

The sibilant, almost human whispers present in the passage become a chorus in this massive chamber, eerily echoing off the walls.

Anyone able to speak Auran gets the distinct impression that the whispers in this chamber are more than just a trick of wind and pipes. Occasionally, such folk can make out what must be words in the language of elemental air—words like "hopeless, sacrilege, enemies," and so on. The words come from specially prepared air tubes leading to the surface, and are little more than a subtle way to discourage tomb robbery in a language few modern tomb robbers are likely to understand.

Thick cobwebs completely cover the arch leading to area 7, blocking any view of that chamber beyond a flickering green light that seems to be a good distance to the north. Characters standing within 5 feet of the cobwebs can see through the mess enough to notice that a short flight of stairs descends from the arch, but more detail than that is impossible to make out. Dozens of tiny spiders dwell within these webs, but they are completely harmless. Slashing through the webs is a full-round action. A character can barrel his way through the mess, but in so doing he becomes completely covered by spider webs to the point at which he can no longer see. Clearing webs from the eyes of such a character requires a standard action.

Even a casual inspection (Search DC 0) reveals that the east wing is not as collapsed as it first appears. A 10-ft.-wide opening in the middle of the debris leads to the wolves' den, area 5.

Creatures: The east wing of this large chamber houses a small pack of three hungry wolves that eagerly attack anyone who enters the room. Two of the mangy curs look as if they haven't eaten in days. A third wolf is a little larger than the others and does not look hungry in the least. A straight line of scar tissue bisects its face from forehead to muzzle, a nasty battleaxe wound from years ago.

Wolf (3): hp 9, 9, 20; *Monster Manual* 283.

Tactics: The wolves prefer to gang up on the nearest opponent, using their trip ability to put an enemy on the ground as soon as possible. They then savage the prone opponent until it stops moving, at which point they move on to the next target. If presented with multiple targets, they tend to choose the smallest or weakest-looking foe.

5. Wolf Den

The wolves dwell in the nearly blocked-off terminus of the east wing. Medium or larger characters must get down on their hands and knees to negotiate the rubble passage.

The far side is rank with the smell of wild animals. Irregular piles of rubble litter the den, as do hundreds of bones and bone fragments from the creatures' past meals. Most of these belong to animals, but a few are unmistakably human.

Treasure: A DC 5 Search check in the northern half of the den turns up an old leather backpack half-buried under a pile of humanoid bones. The bag contains an elaborate lantern of indigo metal inset with indigo glass panes. The lantern is worth 50 gp. A DC 15 Search check on the opposite side of the room turns up an intricately carved armband of unmistakable elven craftsmanship, bearing a repeating leaf motif. The armband is worth 75 gold to a nonelf, and 100 gold to an elf NPC (such as the Diamond Lake mine manager Ellival Moonmeadow or one of his servitors).

A DC 20 Search of the rubble mostly blocking off the passage turns up what appears to be a marble index finger cracked off a statue. The finger exactly matches the right hand of the bas-relief sarcophagus lid figure in area **7**.

6. Gallery of Seven Lanterns

A wide dais spanning the back half of the western wing calls attention to a faded fresco upon the south, west, and north walls. From a vantage point at the center of the dais, the wall painting makes it look like you stand within a massive room with seven short hallways radiating outward from a central point. A chain dangles from the ceiling at the end of each hallway, and each chain bears a gleaming colored lantern. Clockwise, the colors are red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet.

Though a bit faded, the fresco is in remarkably good shape given its advanced age. Canny players will notice that the seven colored lanterns correspond to the seven colors of the rainbow, and that they are all lit. This is a clue regarding how to bypass the face door in area **8**.

7. False Tomb (EL Variable)

A wide stairway descends into an immense domed chamber. Seven short tunnels branch from the room in all directions, extending some thirty feet before ending in rounded walls. At the terminus of each passage, a thick chain dangles from an unseen high ceiling. Five of the chains bear colorful lanterns, but two hold nothing at all. Opposite the entry stairs, a bright green lantern containing what looks like a torch casts a weird, murky light about the room. Countless chips of glass and shiny metal inset into the chamber's domed ceiling reflect this light, giving the impression of starlight and falling snow. The dome starts about ten feet off the ground and reaches an apex about thirty feet over the center of the room.

Below the dome's peak, a long dais holds what appears to be a marble sarcophagus. A milky white bas-relief figure, perhaps of a human, rests passively upon the sarcophagus lid. Unlike the rest of the tomb, this room is completely silent.

The sarcophagus in the center of the chamber might suggest that this is the final chamber in Zosiel's burial cairn. It is in fact a false tomb meant to discourage grave robbers, and contains a number of opportunities for such interlopers to meet an untimely end. Arcane elevators hidden in the ends of two branch passages lead to the quarters of the architect Nadroc and his team of servitors, who dwelled below for months while completing Zosiel's tomb. Because the chamber is quite complex, individual elements of the room are covered under their own headings below.

The Sarcophagus

At the center of the chamber is a raised platform, upon which sits a sealed sarcophagus. The lid bears a white stone relief of a tall figure cloaked in a simple garment of flowing cloth. It's difficult to say why, exactly, but the outfit conjures thoughts of ancient times. The figure at first looks human, but a cursory examination reveals that it is about 7 feet tall, is completely hairless, and is of indeterminate sex. Its arms and hands rest at its side. The left hand curls upon itself in a fist, but the right is placed palm up, with the thumb turned in and all but the index finger held parallel to the arm. The index finger, originally curled under the thumb (see illustration), was broken off by tomb raiders centuries ago and now rests amid the rubble in area **5**. The extended fingers represent a clue to the location of the true tomb.

The figure wears a scarab-like amulet around its neck, inscribed with the personal symbol of Zosiel. Like Icosiol's personal glyph in area **2**, this symbol has been all but forgotten in the modern age. A DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check reveals only that it is a personal glyph of some powerful elemental entity. See the Glyphs of the Wind Dukes sidebar on page 21 for more information on how the PCs can learn more about the strange symbol.

The sarcophagus rests upon a small raised platform carved in the shape of a stylistic arrow, with the tip aligned with the head of the relief figure upon the lid and a short "shaft" extending from the foot of the sarcophagus. A DC 15 Strength check is sufficient to shift the sarcophagus platform one "click" clockwise, until it comes to rest pointed at the next short tunnel extending from the central

chamber. See the tunnel descriptions below for details on what happens when the arrow points at each tunnel. The sarcophagus platform cannot be moved counter-clockwise. When the PCs arrive, the arrow's tip points to the orange lantern (area 7O). The sarcophagus bears a fiery arcane trap set to trigger when the lid is lifted off the stone coffin, and is completely empty.

Sarcophagus Trap: CR 2; magic device; touch trigger (opening the sarcophagus lid); automatic reset; spell effect (*burning hands*, 1st-level wizard, 1d4 fire, DC 11 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 26.

The Tunnels

The ceiling of these tunnels is 10 feet off the ground, but the alcove ceilings at the ends of the tunnels extend 40 feet, just within the shadowy radiance of a torch. Unusually colored lanterns hang from long chains attached to the alcove ceilings, dangling about 5 feet from the floor. The indigo and red lanterns are missing. Each lantern is worth 50 gp.

The lanterns are an elaborate key mechanism. When torches have been placed inside all of the lanterns, the mouth of the howling face bas-relief in area **8** opens, revealing passage to Zosiel's true tomb. When all seven lanterns have been lit, the glass and metal chips imbedded in the dome ceiling cast eerie reflections about the room, making it difficult to concentrate within the chamber. All attack rolls made by anyone within the room when all lanterns have been lit suffer a –2 penalty due to the distracting effect.

As noted above, two lanterns are nowhere to be seen. The indigo lantern rests in a backpack in area **5**, while the red lantern is submerged in area **20** of the laborers' quarters.

A DC 10 Search check at the end of each tunnel is sufficient to turn up a 5-foot-diameter circle carved into the floor, directly below the hanging lantern (or where a hanging lantern would be in the case of the red and indigo tunnels). The circles form the tops of arcane elevators in the case of the yellow, green, and indigo tunnels, and are merely decorative in the case of all other tunnels.

Red: The lantern that once hung from the chain at the end of this tunnel is nowhere to be seen. In fact it was taken by a member of Ulavant's Seeker investigation 60 years ago and still rests with the thief's corpse in area **20**.

Orange: An orange lantern hangs at the end of this passage. The arrow platform at the center of the room points to this tunnel when the PCs arrive.

Yellow: A yellow lantern hangs from the chain at the end of this tunnel. When the arrow platform at the center of the chamber points at this tunnel, a great rumbling from below the chamber can be heard as the circular stone at the end of the tunnel rises eight feet into the air, pushed up by a 5-foot-diameter metal cylinder that seems to arise from the ground itself. Seconds after it comes to a rest, two thin doors slide into the sides of the cylinder, revealing a small empty chamber.

The cylinder is an arcane elevator that leads to the personal quarters of Nadroc, the Wind Duke architect who constructed Zosiel's tomb. The cylinder fits only one Medium creature at a time (two Small creatures, four Tiny creatures, and so on). A Large creature can cram itself into the cylinder, but can take no standard or full-round actions while stuffed within the cramped space.

When a PC enters the cylinder, the doors immediately slam closed, and the entire contraption lowers itself into the floor. The stone "cap" locks into place once it goes flush with the floor, but the rest of the apparatus continues downward for one round, finally coming to rest in area **9**. The doors slide open quietly when the elevator comes to a stop. One round after the passenger exits the cylinder, the doors close and the contraption rises on a column of air to return to area **7**. If the arrow platform above is moved to point to another tunnel while the cylinder is at rest in area **9**, the elevator remains at the bottom of the shaft until the arrow once more points at the yellow tunnel. A button inset into the wall near the bottom of the shaft calls the elevator down at any time.

Green: Several years ago, an explorer placed an everburning torch in the green lantern that hangs at the end of this tunnel, and it has remained here ever since. Like the yellow passage, this tunnel boasts an arcane elevator that descends to another subdungeon, in this case the lair of the eight Wind Duke laborers who helped Nadroc build Zosiel's tomb. Unlike the previous elevator, however, this one is jammed and is not likely to survive much experimentation.

When the arrow platform points at this tunnel, a cacophonous creaking of stone against stone emerges from the ground below the green lantern. Anyone standing within the tunnel feels the ground rumble slightly, as if something is about to give way.

The elevator can handle only three more rounds of this stress. On the third round of rumbling, the stone circle and the elevator apparatus beneath it completely give way, clattering to the ground of area **15** 60 feet below. The collapse occurs on the third round in which the arrow points at the tunnel. The three rounds need not be consecutive. Characters standing on this area when it collapses can make a DC 12 Reflex save to scramble onto solid ground.

One round after the elevator falls, the PCs may make a Listen check to hear the skittering of thousands of insects making their way up the shaft toward them. The DC for this check is 5 for PCs in the green lantern tunnel, and 10 for PCs in the main chamber of area **7**.

Two rounds later, a living geyser of beetles bursts from the shaft. They make for the nearest PC, eagerly attempting to devour the character and move on to the next. The undulating blanket of beetles trails a thin coat of bright yellow acid in its wake.

Along with the beetles emerges a skittering mad slasher, a horrible aberration with

Code Monkey Publishing

CMP

RPG Toolkit

Throughout time games have evolved to such an extent that no man can know the rules to them all!

Monkeys to the rescue! Saving you time and headaches in understanding all the rules, Code Monkey Publishing is proud to bring you RPG Toolkit, the next evolution in role playing game utilities!

Designed for generic rules systems, whether d20, d42, or d666, RPG Toolkit will allow you the freedom and flexibility to make your game the way YOU want it to be!

Coming 2005

www.codemonkeypublishing.com

RPG Toolkit is an official licensed product of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. The Wizards of the Coast logo is a registered trademarks of Wizards of the Coast, Inc., a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc. RPG Toolkit and the Code Monkey Publishing logo are registered trademarks of Code Monkey Publishing, LLC

six sharp legs sprouting from a central body that is little more than a disgusting eye. It attempts to avoid the beetle swarm (since sharing a space with the swarm at the end of its turn means taking damage) and maneuvers to position itself to make best use of its Whirlwind Attack feat.

The 60-foot shaft leading to area **15** is pitted and scarred, which makes climbing down relatively easy (DC 5).

MAD SLASHER **CR 2**

CE Medium aberration (*Miniatures Handbook* 64)
Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Spot +0, Listen +0

AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12
hp 26 (4 HD)
Fort +3, **Ref** +4, **Will** +4

Spd 40 ft.
Melee 2 claws +6 (1d8+1)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +4
Abilities Str 13, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 6
Feats Combat Reflexes, Weapon Finesse, Whirlwind Attack[B]
Skills Survival +7

ACID BEETLE SWARM **CR 1**

N Diminutive vermin (swarm)
Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; tremorsense 30 ft., Spot +4, Listen +4

AC 17, touch 17, flat-footed 14
hp 9 (2 HD)
Immune weapon damage; swarm traits, vermin traits
Fort +3, **Ref** +3, **Will** +0

Spd 20 ft., climb 20 ft.
Melee swarm (1d6 plus 1d4 acid)
Attack Options acid
Special Attack distraction
Base Atk +1; **Grp** —

Abilities Str 1, Dex 17, Con 10, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2
SQ swarm traits, vermin traits
Skills Climb +11, Listen +4, Spot +4
Acid (Ex): A creature hit by an acid beetle's swarm attack takes 1d4 points of acid damage (DC 11 Fortitude save half). The save DC is Constitution-based.
Distraction (Ex): Any living creature that begins its turn with an acid beetle swarm in its space must succeed on a DC 11 Fortitude save or be nauseated for 1 round. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Blue: The ceiling over the blue lantern is 50 feet high, unlike the other lantern shafts, which top out at 40 feet. Anyone standing at the bottom of the shaft can make a DC 15 Spot check to notice that the shaft ceiling is not visible in the radius of normal torchlight, unlike the ceilings of the other lantern alcoves.

At the top of the shaft, another passage leads to the northeast (area **8**). To reach this passage, the PCs must devise a way to climb 40 feet. The easiest way up is to climb the thick chain (DC 15 Climb check).

A skeleton lies in a heap on the floor here. A DC 15 Heal or Knowledge (nature) check reveals several crushed bones, as if the unlucky fellow died from a great fall.

Indigo: The chain at the end of this passage ends in a simple hook, as the indigo lantern was stolen years ago and eventually ended up in a backpack in area **5**. If the arrow platform points at this tunnel, a metal arcane elevator identical in appearance to that described in the yellow passage above rises from the floor under the dangling chain. Characters inspecting the apparatus can make a DC 0 Spot check to notice numerous crushed bones and moldy clothes upon the floor of the cylinder, an obvious clue that all is not as it should be with this arcane elevator. A careful Search (DC 10) turns up a pouch containing 35 gp, 15 sp, and a small red ruby worth 50 gp. Two rounds after a character stands within the cylinder the doors close and the contraption utterly crushes everything within it, sinking back into the ground until the arrow structure once more points at the indigo corridor.

False Elevator Trap: CR 2; mechanical device; location trigger (inside the elevator); automatic reset; ceiling moves down (2d6, crush); never miss; onset delay (2 rounds); Search DC 15; Disable Device 20.

Violet: A violet lantern hangs at the end of this passage.

Ghosts in the Machine

Once each week, the minor wind spirits inhabiting the Whispering Cairn follow Nadroc's ancient instructions to reset certain elements of the tomb's design. At this time, the sarcophagus in area 7 rotates counter-clockwise to once again point at the orange passage. The elevators in areas **7Y** and **7I** rise and open, testing their lifting mechanism and doors in a routine that lasts a full minute. The elevator in area **7G** heaves and shudders at this time, but does not rise. The stress is enough to collapse the elevator, as outlined above. Theoretically, if the party has not yet explored the Lair of the Laborers before the passage of three weeks, this collapse might open a new part of the dungeon for the PCs.

The spirits also reset the *burning hands* trap on the sarcophagus. Once every year a powerful ancient sorcery replaces any of the colored lanterns that have been taken from the cairn, creating exact duplicates that hang from the correct chains. Unfortunately, the poorly worded original incantation ensures replacements only for lanterns that have been taken from the cairn, meaning those lanterns that were taken from area 7 but that remain elsewhere in the cairn are not replaced.

If the party is completely flummoxed by this room, a fortuitously timed "refresh" of area 7 offers a blunt way to get the action moving.

8. Passage of the Face (EL 4)

A thin passage extends into shadows to the northeast. Perhaps seventy feet away, the passage ends in what looks like an enormous stone human face, its mouth open in an angry scream.

The physiology of the face is identical to that of the near-human sexless figure depicted in bas-relief upon the sarcophagus in the room below. The screaming visage dominates the entire 20-ft. by 20-ft. wall at the end of the corridor. Anyone walking down the hall may make a DC 15 Spot check to notice several long scratch marks in the floor, as if something had been dragged toward the lip leading 40 feet down to area 7. These marks were left by victims blown away by the blasting winds of the Trap, leftovers of futile attempts to slow their trajectory by jamming a dagger into the floor. Anyone actively examining the floor notices these marks with a DC 5 Search check.

Trap: A pressure plate 60 ft. down the passage triggers if more than 60 lbs. are placed upon it. When this happens, the face animates, and a terrible wind erupts from its wailing mouth. At the same time, the face's eyes spin with hypnotic illusory patterns in all of the colors of the rainbow that correspond with unlit lanterns in the chamber below. Anyone within the face's gaze must make a DC 13 Will save or become paralyzed, frozen in place and unable to move. Each round on its turn, the subject can attempt another saving throw to snap out of it.

The terrible wind is another major concern of anyone unlucky enough to be in the passage when the trap is sprung. On the first round, the mouth blasts a strong wind, with the intensity ratcheting up one category every round, going from strong to severe to windstorm to hurricane. See page 95 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for rules regarding wind strength. Each round, creatures within the wind must make a DC 18 Fortitude save or be subject to the wind's effects. Small characters are potentially blown away as early as round 2, whereas Medium creatures face that risk on round 3.

Blown away characters are knocked prone and tumble 1d4x10 feet, taking 1d4 points of nonlethal damage per 10 feet. Flying characters are blown back 2d6x10 feet and take 2d6 points of nonlethal damage due to battering and buffeting. Nonflying characters pushed over the edge of the shaft plummet to the floor below, suffering 4d6 points of damage upon impact. Such characters may attempt to snatch the indigo lantern's chain with a successful DC 10 Reflex save, with success preventing the fall and damage.

The wind continues at hurricane force for 10 minutes before it stops and the trap resets itself. The only way through the face is to ignite torches in area 7. Once a torch has been lit, that color fails to appear in the face's hypnotic eyes. When all torches have been lit, the trap is effectively disarmed. The stone comprising the mouth's interior vanishes, allowing passage to the chamber beyond.

The Face in Darkness: CR 4*; magical device; location trigger (pressure plate); automatic reset; multiple traps (one *hold person* trap and one *control winds* trap); spell effect (hypnotic eyes; *hold person*, 3rd-level cleric, DC 13 Will save); spell effect (wind blast; *control winds*, 12th-level caster, DC 18 Fortitude save); multiple targets (all characters within gaze of face); Search DC 25; Disable Device 30.

*Strictly speaking, the CR for this trap should be higher. Due to the numerous clues nearby (the dagger gouges, the skeleton at the bottom of the shaft) and the long delay before the wind can really harm the PCs, the trap's CR has been lowered on an ad hoc basis. Be aware that this trap could be extremely deadly.

LAIR OF THE ARCHITECT

It took the Wind Duke architect Nadroc nearly a year of solid work to design and construct the Whispering Cairn. During this period he dwelt within his work-in-progress, in a special series of chambers called the Lair of the Architect. Due to the complexity of the elevator mechanism, this part of the cairn is not quite as looted as areas 1–7, and contains a number of treasures from Nadroc's time. Ceilings in the Lair of the Architect reach a uniform height of 20 feet. Walls are made of solid stone.

9. Architect's Foyer (EL 2)

The walls here are covered in bas-relief images similar to the slender figure upon the sarcophagus lid in the chamber above. Nearly a dozen androgynous, hairless humanoids stand in poses of deference, almost as if they are paying homage to the viewer. Many extend their hands in adoration, their faces awash in adulation. Several of the statues lack hands, arms, heads, or anything else easily hacked off by long-absent tomb robbers.

About fifteen feet to the south, a dark passage extends from an elaborately carved arch. Only a little of this hallway is visible, however, as a large stone block obscures most of the passage.

The stone block is roughly 10 feet wide by 2 feet deep by 8 feet tall, and nearly seals off the passage to the south. A large niche about the same size as the block opens in the ceiling 10 feet above. A fine layer of dust covers everything in the room. A character crawling upon the top of the block gains a decent view of the darkened hallway beyond, and is able to make out a handful of alcoves marking the walls of the tunnel at regular intervals. Squeezing between the tip of the arch and the top of the stone slab requires a DC 25 Escape Artist check.

A button inset into the wall near the elevator shaft serves as a call button for the elevator. Pressing it recalls the elevator to this area.

Trap: The stone slab is far too heavy to lift, but up to four characters working together can topple it to the north with a successful DC 25 Strength check. The slab rests upon a pressure plate set to trigger when the weight of the slab is removed.

A noxious green gas fills the room from valves hidden within the mouths of the adoring bas-reliefs lining the room's walls.

Slab Trap: CR 2; mechanical; touch trigger (removing weight from pressure plate); manual reset; gas; multiple targets (all targets in area 9); never miss; onset delay (3 rounds); poison (essence of oilcloud, DC 13 Fortitude save resists, 1 Str/1d6 Str); Search DC 15; Disable Device 20.

10. Passage of Honor (EL 2)

Curious carvings that seem to represent a stirring tempest cover the walls of this ten-foot-wide passage. At ten-foot intervals, small alcoves flank the passage, and each alcove contains an androgynous humanoid figure with cupped hands. The figures stand roughly seven feet tall. A faint wind seems to play within the passage, but it's difficult to tell where it's coming from.

Each statue bears the likeness of one of Nadroc's noble Wind Duke patrons. Their cupped hands once cradled miniature statuettes of magnificent vaati buildings constructed by the architect in their names. These figurines rested upon a soft current of air immediately above the statues' cupped hands. These currents still exist, and will hold any Tiny or smaller object aloft indefinitely. They are the source of the strange breeze in the hallway. The statuettes now rest in the pouch of an ancient tomb robber who lies dead in area 11.

The passage grows unnaturally cold at the point of the third and final set of alcoves, a result of a patch of brown mold in area 11.

Creature: A gruesome aberration known as a lurking strangler skulks within the shadows of one of the display alcoves. The strangler entered the Whispering Cairn a week ago at the behest of its master, a Vecna-worshiping wizard called the Faceless One who infiltrated Diamond Lake about a month ago. This enigmatic figure ordered the creature to explore the ancient tombs around the town, and it soon thereafter became trapped in the Architect's Lair after riding the elevator there during a routine test (see the "Ghosts in the Machine" sidebar). The Faceless One is a major enemy in "The Three Faces of Evil," the next Age of Worms Adventure Path installment.

The lurking strangler is a 3-foot-long strand of striated muscle connected to two floating eyeballs. It stretches and twists as it floats through the air, but it does not speak (though it understands Beholder and Common). It attempts to hide in the darkness until it can attack a character with a surprise *sleep* eye ray.

LURKING STRANGLER **CR 2**

LE Tiny aberration (*Monster Manual III* 100)

Init +4; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft.; Spot +8, Listen +0

Languages understands Common and Beholder but does not speak

AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 12

hp 11 (2 HD)

Fort +3, **Ref** +4, **Will** +4

Spd 5 ft. fly 20 ft. (good)

Melee lash +7 (1d4–3)

Ranged eye ray +7 ranged touch

Special Attack suffocate

Base Atk +1; **Grp** –10

Abilities Str 5, Dex 19, Con 13, Int 4, Wis 10, Cha 10

SQ flight

Feats Alertness[B], Stealthy, Weapon Finesse[B]

Skills Hide +14, Listen +5, Move Silently +6, Search +1, Spot +8

All-around vision (Ex): Lurking stranglers receive a +4 racial bonus on Spot and Search checks, and they can't be flanked.

Eye rays (Su): Each of the lurking strangler's eyes can shoot a different ray. One duplicates a *cause fear* spell; the other duplicates a *sleep* spell. Each ray only affects one target at a time. These effects operate at caster level 3, and are negated by a DC 11 Will save. The save DC is Charisma based.

Flight (Su): A lurking strangler possesses natural buoyancy that allows it to fly at a speed of 20 feet (good maneuverability). This buoyancy also grants it a permanent *feather fall* effect (as the spell) with range personal.

Suffocate (Ex): If a lurking strangler hits a helpless foe with its lash attack, it wraps itself around the victim's throat and begins to choke it. In the first round the victim falls unconscious (0 hit points). In the following round, she drops to –1 hit points and is dying. In the third round, she suffocates and dies.

11. Gallery (EL 2)

A dull gray stone pillar reaches from floor to ceiling in this large chamber. Halls extend to the east and west.

The west wall of the room's gray central pillar holds a deep recession that ends at what looks like a fountain basin about 4 feet off the ground. This is the nutrient

still, a magical apparatus capable of churning forth a nutritive orange sludge that looks a bit like vomit and tastes a bit like gravy. One serving is sufficient to sustain a character for a full day. Fifteen servings can be harvested from the basin when it is full (as it is now). Servings are replaced at a rate of one per day.

The area around the nutrient still is infested with brown mold (*Dungeon Master's Guide* 76). Living creatures within 5 feet of the brown mold take 3d6 points of nonlethal cold damage. Fire brought within 5 feet of brown mold causes it to instantly double in size. Cold damage, such as from a *ray of frost*, instantly destroys it. The extent of the mold infestation is displayed on the map.

The central pillar's east face bears a similar niche that extends from floor to ceiling. In ancient times, Nadroc hung his architect's tools on pegs in this alcove. An unfortunate tomb robber later attempted to steal these tools, bringing a massive stone column down on his head. A DC 15 Search check along the short wall north of the column reveals a hidden catch. Triggering the catch hoists the column back into the ceiling, revealing a crushed human skeleton wearing shiny silver chainmail. Several of Nadroc's tools were destroyed when the stone column fell, but others remain unharmed on their pegs where the architect left them thousands of years ago. Once the column has returned to the ceiling the trap is forever useless, as the trigger was destroyed when the column fell.

A dry fountain along the south face of the central pillar features a low basin and a wall spigot about 8 feet high, looking something like a shower. The enslaved water elemental that once powered this apparatus died centuries ago.

Treasure: The corpse in the tool closet wears a suit of +1 *chainmail*, but almost all of his other possessions were crushed along with his bones. In a leather sack so old that it crumbles to the touch can be found the remains of three broken statuettes of Nadroc's previous commissions (looted from area 10) and three that remain in excellent condition—a grand palace, a slim spire with eight connected smaller towers of different heights, and what looks like a grand stadium. Each intact statuette is worth 200 gp. The intact tools are a *wand of unseen servant* (16 charges), a *wand of shatter* (7 charges), and *goggles of minute seeing*.

12. Living Quarters

This wide chamber must once have been the living quarters of an important figure. A large stone slab that suggests the shape of a bed rests against the east wall, under a huge bas-relief of a robust, long-nosed bald humanoid figure with outstretched hands. The figure wears a lovingly sculpted wind-tossed robe that gives him the appearance of a triumphant god. A glyph that looks like a stylized arrow marks an amulet worn around the figure's neck. Wardrobes and dressers seemingly carved from the stone walls look to have been ransacked a long time ago.

This room was emptied of valuables centuries ago. A thin bed of whirling air rests atop the stone slab against the east wall. The wind is strong enough to suspend a Medium character above the stone comfortably, making it an excellent bed. Anyone sharing a space with the bed must make a DC 20 Will save to avoid becoming fatigued. This effect ends when the PC is no longer in the bed's space. The glyph on the amulet is Nadroc's personal symbol, and is reproduced as the compass rose of the map of this dungeon level. See the "Glyphs of the Wind Dukes" sidebar for more information regarding this symbol.

13. Workshop (EL 1)

The ceiling of this large chamber glows with what looks like natural sunlight, illuminating a series of worktables, vises, spinning wheels, and blocks of unfinished marble that identify the room as a sculptor's workshop. A huge unfinished statue of an imposing bare-chested warrior wielding a staff-like rod in its left hand dominates the north wall. The hairless figure looks similar to the bas-relief on the sarcophagus upstairs, but is clearly meant to be a different person. A short red metal pedestal against the south wall displays what appears to be a jet-black stone egg the size of a small boulder. A gold glyph—an equilateral triangle with short hash marks through each leg—marks the face of the egg.

The statue is meant to represent the great Wind Duke who used the *Rod of Law* to defeat Miska the Wolf-Spider. The "rod" in the statue's hand is a petrified wood staff that Nadroc planned to replace later with a more ornate decoration. Anyone examining the staff (Search DC 5) notices that six grooves have been cut along its shaft, suggesting seven segments.

The workshop has been competently looted, and all that remains are bits of furniture and parts of more elaborate sculpting tools. The *daylight* coming from the ceiling is a permanent magical effect.

A successful DC 15 Knowledge (the planes) check identifies the gold symbol upon the ebon egg as the personal device of Ogrémoch, a legendary elemental prince of evil. A DC 20 result notes that Ogrémoch and a legion of lesser earth elementals were said to have served on the side of the Queen of Chaos at the great final battle at Pesh that ended a primordial war between Law and Chaos.

Creature: The egg is the dormant form of a hibernating Small earth elemental who served at Ogrémoch's side at the battle of Pesh and who was later captured by the victorious Wind Dukes of Aaqa and forced into a life of magical servitude. The elemental, an evil lout called Artophanx, is forever bound to this chamber, compelled by ancient incantations to assist the Wind Duke Nadroc, who constantly grilled him about the properties of indigenous rock or the likely efficacy of this or that masonic flourish. The Lair of the Architect has been empty for thousands of years, so Artophanx went into hibernation centuries ago, and snaps out of his torpor only if touched. If this happens, the elemental immediately

takes on an anthropomorphic form and barks a challenge in Terran, the grating, gravelly language of elemental earth. If the PCs do not respond, Artophanx attacks.

Artophanx wants more than anything else to escape, and might be fooled into cooperating with the party if successfully bluffed by a Terran-speaking character. If convinced that the PCs might be able to help him escape the room (something actually well beyond their power) he can relate some useful facts about the Whispering Cairn's construction, including the fact that it was built by a Wind Duke named Nadroc to honor a warrior named Zosiel who died on the fields of Pesh and the fact that Zosiel's true tomb lies beyond the face in area **8**.

Small Earth Elemental: hp 11; AL Neutral evil; *Monster Manual* 97.

Treasure: The red metal pedestal is of a material totally unknown elsewhere on this world, and is worth 300 gp. It weighs 200 lbs. The wooden pole held by the statue doubles as a masterwork quarterstaff.

14. Toilet

This austere toilet has not been used in centuries.

LAIR OF THE LABORERS

Nadroc's creation of the Whispering Cairn required the assistance of eight skilled Wind Duke laborers who dwelt in this sub-level. They were several layers below Nadroc in the complex social strata of the Wind Dukes of Aaqa, so the stonework and amenities of this level are markedly inferior to similar accoutrements in the Lair of the Architect. The ceilings on this level uniformly reach a height of 20 feet. Walls are worked stone.

15. Laborer's Foyer

Dozens of bas-relief figures similar to the one on the sarcophagus lid in the room above stare disapprovingly from the walls here. Many sport crossed arms and stern expressions. A few of the statues' heads are missing, and some have huge chunks torn out of them. Others have a weird melted appearance, as if they'd been sprayed by something terrible. A large glyph that looks like a stylized arrow points down a short corridor to the north that leads to a four-way intersection.

The damage to this room comes from the acid beetles inhabiting area **16**. The alcove in the south wall conforms to the shaft leading to area **7** above. The shaft starts 20 feet above the floor of area **15**, and is pitted with acid-burned handholds (Climb DC 10). The glyph—Nadroc's personal sign—is identical to the one found on the amulet in area **12**.

16. Food Room/ The Hive (EL 3)

The north and south walls of this large chamber taper in somewhat, and in the nook of the far eastern wall rests a wide stone basin backed by a five-foot-tall shelf. A hardened orange paste spills out over the two-foot basin lip and covers much of the shelf. Thousands of tiny beetles with bright blue carapaces skitter and tunnel through the chalky substance. A keening insect chorus fills the room. A huge organic mass completely fills the room's southwest corner. Judging by the beetles spilling from within, it appears to be an enormous nest.

In ancient times, Nadroc's laborers sustained themselves on the nutritious substance generated by this fountain. The orange substance is still edible, but those who eat it must make a DC 14 Fortitude save to resist becoming sickened for 1 hour due to the ubiquitous beetle waste.

The nest in the southwest corner has the consistency of papier-mâché, and can be cut through easily. If burned, it produces an acrid black smoke that grants concealment to every creature in the room for 6 rounds or until the smoke is blown away.

Creatures: This room serves as the central breeding ground of a colony of aggressive beetles who feed upon the edible orange sludge that fills the basin. When the PCs enter the room, the vermin skittering about the sludge coalesces into the form of an acid beetle swarm, and a Medium giant bombardier beetle, the cow of the colony, moves to attack, opening with a deadly spray of acid. The insects fight to the death.

Giant Bombardier Beetle: hp 13; *Monster Manual* 284.

Acid Beetle Swarm: hp 9; see page 26.

Treasure: A DC 10 Spot check reveals the presence of three oblong lumps completely covered with orange sludge in the room's southeast corner. These are the skeletonized remains of three long-dead human figures in soiled red leather armor. An eight-pointed star symbol marks the left breast of each moldy suit of armor, a symbol that marks the dead as members of Ulavant's Seeker band, which met a grim end in the Lair of the Laborers some 60 years ago. A DC 15 bardic knowledge or Knowledge (geography, history, or nobility) check identifies the symbol as belonging to the Seekers, a group of unscrupulous archeologists and pseudohistorians. One of the Seeker guards has three *potions of cure light wounds*, and another bears a *pearl of power* (1st level).

A DC 15 Search check in the ruined remains of the nest turns up a mummified human hand still wearing a *ring of feather falling*.

17. Sleeping Quarters (EL 2)

Eight man-sized stone slabs, about four feet off the ground, are arranged in two rows in this large room. A long-dead corpse, possibly a human, lays sprawled out upon one of these slabs, his red leather armor the only hint of color in the otherwise drab room. The north and south walls taper in somewhat, and the short west wall abuts a small stone stage. The red clay statue of a powerfully built warrior wielding a cylinder-headed greatclub stands tall upon the stage, its eyes surveying the room.

Each round characters within this room must make a DC 15 Will save to resist becoming fatigued. The fatigue ends when the PC leaves the room. The stone slabs once served as beds for Nadroc's Wind Duke laborers. The skull of the human male corpse on the southwest slab has been utterly crushed by the stone greatclub of the statue upon the western stage, a marble representation of the Guardian of the Veil, a mythical Wind Duke figure who stands sentry between the lands of sleep and wakefulness. The statue itself is not attached to the floor, and may be tipped over with a DC 20 Strength check. It weighs 800 lbs.

Creature: When the PCs first arrive, a giant bombardier beetle stag stumbles about between the sleeping slabs. The fatigued beetle does not respond to the sounds of conflict in area **16**, preferring instead to enjoy a rare moment of rest. It attacks any non-beetle creature it sees, leading off with a spray of acid.

If any non-Wind Duke falls asleep on one of the stone slabs, the terracotta statue on the stage in the western alcove animates and attempts to smash the sleeper with its club (treat as a slam attack, as the club is merely a part of the Guardian statue).

Giant Bombardier Beetle: hp 20; fatigued (–2 to Strength and Dexterity); *Monster Manual* 284.

The Guardian of the Veil, Medium animated object: hp 31; SQ hardness 2; *Monster Manual* 13.

Treasure: The corpse on the southwest slab wears masterwork leather armor emblazoned with the eight-pointed symbol of the Seekers and a silver ring worth 75 gp.

18. Tool Alcoves

Numerous pegs extending from the walls of these alcoves once held the excavation gear of the Wind Duke laborers, but anything of worth was looted long ago.

19. Submerged Showers

In ancient days, the laborers cleaned themselves and disposed of their waste in the lower level of their lair (areas **19–22**). An enslaved water elemental commanded an elaborate set of showers and saw to the sanitary needs of the workers. Centuries of isolation have driven this creature insane, and now the lower chambers are completely submerged in water. Numerous drains near the shower pillars are wholly clogged with debris deposited by the elemental, leaving no way for the PCs to drain the area. The PCs first encounter the water about halfway down the stairs leading to area **19**.

Refer to page 92 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* to re-familiarize yourself with D&D's underwater rules. To summarize the most important element, a character can hold his breath for a number of rounds equal to twice his Constitution score, as long as he takes only move actions or free actions. Taking a standard action or a full-round action reduces this period of time by one round. After that period of time, he must make a DC 10 Constitution check to continue holding his breath. Each round, the DC increases by 1. If he fails the Constitution check, he begins to drown. In the first round, he falls unconscious (0 hit points). In the following round, he drops to –1 hit points and is dying. In the third round, he's dead.

All of the submerged rooms are completely dark, which should add an eerie element to their exploration. PCs without darkvision must rely on some artificial means of light, such as the *light* spell,

a sunrod, or the everburning torch from area 7G.

The four pillars and central structure of this room are composed of tan stone and contain non-functional shower spigots about 8 feet off the ground.

Creature: The insane Small water elemental still dwells here, spending much of its time spinning in a tight vortex in area 20. It notices the PCs the second one of them touches the water, and swiftly moves to intercept them.

Insane Small water elemental: hp 11; *Monster Manual* 100.

Tactics: The elemental gets +1 to attacks due to its water mastery special quality, but suffers a –4 penalty against the PCs if they stand upon the ground (a safe assumption during combat). This gives the elemental a total attack bonus of +1 for its slam attack. It tries to ambush a torchbearing character first. It has darkvision to 60 feet, and would prefer to fight without a light. It waits until the torchbearer is in the middle of area 19 before attempting to quench the torch (requiring a touch attack and a successful caster level check). Once the elemental has achieved darkness (or if no characters hold an everburning torch), the creature leads off with its vortex before moving in with slam attacks.

20. Locker Room with Benches

This small room contains four long benches and several niches along the walls.

Treasure: A dead human body here bears the red lantern from area 7. It wears red masterwork leather armor with the Seeker insignia over the left breast, and a +1 *short sword* hangs in a molding scabbard on its belt. The corpse's bones are very badly gnawed, and its armor has been torn apart and ruined as if by sharp claws. A DC 10 Heal check reveals that the bones have been cracked open as if something was trying to get at the marrow within. The body has been dead for 50 years or more.

21. Other Locker Room with Benches (EL 2)

This small room contains four long benches and several niches along the walls.

Creature: This chamber is home to the scholar Ulavant, who became a ghoul after his death at the hands of the water elemental prevented him from accomplishing his goal of cataloguing the Whispering Cairn's secrets for the archive of the Free City's Seeker lodge. Ulavant wears a gold ring with the eight-pointed star Seeker insignia on the third finger of his left hand.

Ulavant, ghoul: hp 13; *Monster Manual* 119.

Tactics: Ulavant attempts to paralyze his enemies, starting with what he assumes to be bards, wizards, and sorcerers. Though his mind is now utterly consumed with the need to consume, Ulavant maintains some measure of his brilliance. He also retains a good measure of his original depravity. Should be paralyze all of his victims, he moves the frozen bodies so that they can look into each others eyes before gorging on one of the victims, starting with the throat. This theatrical flourish might just give one of the paralyzed PCs the chance he needs to shake free from the paralysis.

Treasure: A pile of tattered clothes stuffed into one of the lockers hides a pouch containing 38 gold, 2 platinum, and 55 silver pieces. Ulavant's Seeker ring is worth 200 gp. It instantly identifies its wearer as a member of the Seekers, which may have implications with Khellek, the wizard in the trio of rival adventurers introduced in the "Backdrop: Diamond Lake" article elsewhere in this issue.

Note: The bump in EL accounts for the fact that the party is underwater, making the ghoul's paralysis effect much more powerful. It is not, however, as powerful as it might seem. Ulavant's paralysis attack freezes its victims in place, but paralyzed characters can continue to hold their breath for the duration of the paralysis. They do not begin to drown the moment the paralysis begins. They could, however, drown if they run out of breath before the paralysis ends.

22. Toilet

This submerged toilet has not been used in centuries.

PART TWO: THE TRUE TOMB

Areas 23–25 represent Zosiel's true tomb. Very few explorers have penetrated as far as area 23 in the last several thousand years, and no living interloper has managed to negotiate the metal door at the end of that passage to gain the fabulous Chamber of Sighs. When the tomb was constructed, the door was meant to be opened only by the elemental thralls in area 24 at the behest of a Wind Duke who spoke the correct long-forgotten phrase into the door. An elemental would then press a catch on the wall opposite area 23, and the metal door would slide open gingerly. Now, the only way through is to make a deal with the ghost of Alastor Land, a runaway who died exploring the Whispering Cairn nearly 30 years ago and who haunts the place still.

23. Alastor's Haunt (EL 4)

Through the gaping mouth at the end of the hallway is a long, dark room with no floor. A three-foot-wide beam of petrified wood spans the chasm, leading straight ahead into darkness. About ten feet below the beam, countless iron spheres the size of large oranges form an irregular floor, but it's impossible to tell if they represent a wholly solid surface. The northwest and southeast walls are covered in a honeycomb of geometric patterns. The featureless stone ceiling extends about twenty feet from the beam.

This room represents Nadroc's last attempt to dispense with unwanted tomb robbers, so the beam and walls combine to make a devious Trap. Note the side view of this room provided in the map of the True Tomb.

Creatures: A curious grick lives in the iron spheres at the bottom of this room, having tunneled here through some subterranean fissure opened during an ancient earthquake. Each round, PCs standing upon the spheres may make a DC 15 Listen check to hear the grick moving under iron spheres. If it hears the PCs, it rushes up to attack from surprise.

The grick is far from the most potent potential enemy in this room, however, for the place is also the lair of Alastor Land, a young teen runaway who managed to slip through all of the Whispering Cairn's defenses 30 years ago only to die here. Now he lingers on as a ghost, cursed to forever remain in this chamber, wracked with guilt for having abandoned his mother and siblings. As the PCs explore the room, Alastor observes from the Ethereal Plane. His childish giggles follow every PC mistake, while cries of "wow!" or "I thought you were dead that time!" seem to come from the walls as the PCs fight the grick. Once they have defeated the aberration, Alastor decides that they are his best chance to escape the chamber and finally rest with his family.

Immediately after the fight ends, Alastor manifests, appearing as a translucent 13-year-old farm boy with a broken neck, long black fingernails, and a demoniac glare in his eyes. He attempts to shield most of the PCs from his horrific appearance, but the youth has a flair for the dramatic and wants to make a powerful first impression, so he wants at least one of them to see him in his true form. Thereafter, he attempts to move onto the same square as a PC and take over that character with his malevolence special attack. Once he has controlled a PC (or if he cannot manage to do so), he speaks directly to the PCs.

"I have been here countless decades, punished for abandoning my family in a time of need. Over these years, I have seen explorers like you come and go. The trap in the walls kills most of them, but others have left in humiliation, unable to pass through the far metal door. I am unable to leave the way you came because of my curse, but I am able to push through the far wall. Beyond is a glorious chamber of strange carvings and a pillar of air. And there's a catch on the other side of the door that opens it without a problem. I'll trigger it for you if you take my bones from here and bury them with my family on a farmstead just beyond Diamond Lake. Do this for me, and I will be free. I assure you there is no other way through that door."

Alastor left home 30 years ago, in the 565th Common Year (the current Common Year is 595, assuming you don't use some other dating convention). It's been at least a decade since the last adventurers came to this chamber. They fell victim to the iron sphere trap, and their corpses are buried beneath the upper layer of iron balls forming the room's floor. He can direct the PCs to his own skeleton, which lies about three feet below the surface just below the metal door.

If the PCs insist on fighting Alastor, he attempts to kill one of them to prove that he is a worthy opponent, thereafter pleading with them to take his bones back to his family plot. His directions suggest a farmstead 10 minutes east of Diamond Lake, and lead directly to Chapter Three: Tomb Stories, below.

Alastor Land CR 3
Male human ghost commoner 2 (*Monster Manual* 117)
CN Small undead (incorporeal)
Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Spot +6, Listen +6
Languages Common

AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 14
hp 13 (2 HD)
Immune incorporeal traits, undead traits
Fort +0, **Ref** +2, **Will** –1

Spd fly 30 ft. (perfect)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +1
Special Attacks horrific appearance (DC 14), malevolence (DC 18), manifestation, telekinesis (DC 18)

Abilities Str —, Dex 14, Con —, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 17
SQ incorporeal traits, rejuvenation, turn resistance +4, undead traits
Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative
Skills Listen +6, Spot +6

immediately knows he is free from his curse and begins to fade from reality. Before he does so, however, he passes through the northeast wall into area 24 and triggers the catch there. The metal door slides open.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: When the PCs return Alastor Land's bones to his family plot at the Land farmstead, award them experience as if they defeated a CR 3 encounter.

24. The Chamber of Sighs (EL 6)

This cavernous chamber consists of a large stone walkway around a deep chasm that leads into darkness. Four platforms lead from the walkway to a central ring, but two of these platforms are broken. Bright light reminiscent of a summer's day filters down from the ceiling about forty feet above. Four wide galleries extend from the outer walkway, their far walls covered with enormous bas-relief vistas. A sighing wind emits from a huge pillar of rushing air at the center of the chamber. The column extends from the floor to the ceiling, cutting through the room's central ring.

Grick: hp 9; *Monster Manual* 139.

Trap: The geometric patterns on the northwest and southeast walls disguise numerous holes that shoot soft-ball-sized iron spheres across the room when anyone crosses the 15-foot span at the center of the beam. The safest way to cross the room is probably to lower oneself to the uneven surface of spheres below the balance beam, but this risks upsetting the grick that dwells below the spheres. The spheres are difficult terrain, with most Medium creatures sinking about a foot deep. Anyone taking strenuous action (such as attacking) while standing upon the unstable balls must make a DC 10 Balance check or fall prone.

Hail of Iron Spheres: CR 2; mechanical; proximity trigger; automatic reset; Atk +6 ranged (1d4, iron sphere); multiple targets (all targets upon the balance beam); Reflex save DC 16 or fall (1d3); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20.

Treasure: The following goods may be harvested from decomposed bodies buried within the iron spheres: 47 gp, 7 sp, 1 pp, a rusty longsword, and a suit of masterwork banded mail.

Development: When Alastor Land's bones have been interred next to those of his family, the ghost

The central pit is 60 feet deep, ending in a featureless basin. Each perimeter gallery bas-relief portrays a scene from the life of the Wind Duke Zosiel. The sculpting on the walls appears very crude from a distance. Figures are blurred and distorted, and it's impossible to tell what the images are meant to represent. When a character approaches within 10 feet of one of the bas-reliefs, however, valves breathe forth a smoky sheet of steam that covers the entire wall. As the steam eddies and plays about the rough carvings, distinct impressionistic images become apparent on the walls. These images shift and move, making them come alive with action.

24A: This image depicts a peaceful scene featuring several vaati relaxing in an idyllic country scene. Dozens of perfect circles fill the sky above the frolicking figures. As the steam runs over the image, dark, twisted shapes emerge from the sculpture's edges. The shapes coalesce to form monstrous creatures that look like a cross between spiders and wolves. As the creatures approach the Wind Dukes the circles in the sky begin to burst one by one.

This event represents the empire of Aaqa prior to the great war against the armies of Chaos. The circles in the sky represent worlds claimed by the ancient Wind Dukes. Their destruction symbolizes the magnitude of the chaotic threat.

24B: This image depicts a towering vaati figure wearing the glyph of Icosiol standing over a legion of lesser Wind Duke warriors. The central warrior bears the glyph of Zosiel, but each figure bears a glyph of a

distinct Wind Duke warrior named in the *Chronicle of Chan* (see the "Glyphs of the Wind Dukes" sidebar on page 21). As the steam plays about the image, the warriors raise longswords in salute to Icosiol.

24C A group of seven proud noble Wind Dukes present a staff-like rod to a council of superior vaati in this gallery image. As the steam fills the bas-relief's contours the central figure raises the staff above his head, where it splits into seven irregular parts.

Each of the seven Wind Duke presenters bears a carven glyph that identifies him as a member of the "Wandering Dukes" who abandoned the war against Chaos to discover the secrets of the *Rod of Law*. The *Chronicle of Chan* identifies these beings as Amophar, Darbos, Emoniel, Icosiol, Penader, Qadeej, and Uriel.

24D: The bas-relief in this gallery depicts the final battle between Law and Chaos. As the steam moves about the image, the Wandering Duke Qadeej impales Miska the Wolf-Spider, a demonic entity that looks like a drider with four arms and a human head flanked by two wolf heads. As the Wolf-Spider, *Rod*, and Qadeej vanish into a planar rift, Icosiol is struck by a beam from Miska's eyes and slumps dead to the ground.

24E: The pillar of air stretches from floor to ceiling. Any character who steps into the wind is propelled safely to area 25. Doing so means getting past the room's powerful defenders, however.

Creatures: As soon as a PC reaches the walkway or central ring, two tall humanoid figures arise from within the column of air and step out onto the central ring. Both of these creatures—wind warriors who served in the armies of Aaqa at the Battle of Pesh and who honor Zosiel still—wield twin swords and wear ancient ceremonial armor festooned with red pennons that twist and bob as if always blown by a fierce wind. The silent warriors attack intruders, knowing that they are the tomb's last defense.

Wind Warrior (2): hp 39; Appendix 1.

25. The True Tomb

A whooshing pillar of air dominates the northeast half of this rectangular room. Opposite the pillar up a set of three short stairs rests a white marble sarcophagus identical to the one in the room with the colored lanterns far below, complete with a sculpted humanoid figure carved into the lid. A beautifully carved bas-relief on the wall near the sarcophagus depicts the same figure as a bald, androgynous warrior wearing a simple ancient garment and wielding a mighty longsword. To the warrior's left stands a cloaked demoniac figure with two long curved horns tipped in darkest red. The horned figure holds a device composed of a handle and small loop, seemingly using it to control a globe of absolute blackness about two feet in diameter. This globe touches the bald warrior, who raises his arms in surprise. The warrior is depicted as if fading from sight. A slim diadem upon his brow bears an elaborate ovular glyph identical to one carved upon an amulet worn by the figure on the sarcophagus lid.

This area is the true tomb of Zosiel, a minor Wind Duke warrior killed at the Battle of Pesh. A DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) check made by anyone studying the fresco identifies the black globe as a *sphere of annihilation* controlled by the *talisman of the sphere* wielded by the horned figure. Many legends suggest that the deadly *spheres* were created during the great war between Law and Chaos. Now they are the stuff of legends. The image is an accurate representation of Zosiel's death, just moments before the Wind Dukes employed the *Rod of Law* to defeat Miska the Wolf-Spider.

The sarcophagus is completely sealed, exhibiting not even a seam under the lid. It is impossible to damage physically. For all appearances, it is a solid block of marble. When someone steps upon the top stair of the southwestern dais, the bas-relief sculpture animates and the warrior looks directly into the eyes of the character. "Speak my name," it says to the character in his native language. Thereafter, the image fades back into the wall and the chamber grows still.

If the addressed character utters the word "Zosiel," bright blue light shines around the sarcophagus lid. It fades a few seconds later, revealing a seam between the lid and the rest of the sarcophagus. A DC 10 Strength check is sufficient to lift the lid, revealing the Treasure within.

Treasure: Within the sarcophagus are all that remains of Zosiel: a slight silver diadem inscribed with his personal glyph. This is a *circlet of Wisdom* +2, but additional properties of this item will become clear as the Age of Worms Adventure Path continues.

The sarcophagus also includes two long slightly curved black horns with red tips (worth 50 gp each) and a pewter box inscribed with alien, writhing letterforms. A DC 15 Knowledge (the planes) check identifies the glyphs as those of the Queen of Chaos. Melted metal keeps the box sealed, but a decent application of force is sufficient to snap off the top. Inside is a long handle attached to an adamantine loop. This inactive minor artifact radiates strong transmutation magic, but is currently dormant and does nothing. It can be fully activated as a *talisman of the sphere* in "A Gathering of Winds," the sixth installment of the Age of Worms Adventure Path campaign. Allustan can identify the item by name at a glance, noting that the *spheres of annihilation* were holes in the continuity of the multiverse, and that anything they touched was destroyed utterly. After the Battle of Pesh, legend holds that the Wind Dukes scattered them to the corners of the Great Wheel. Far more numerous are the talismans that were said to grant their owners some measure of control over the spheres. Allustan urges the PCs to keep the valuable minor artifact. "One must always be prepared," he says with a wink and a smile.

PART THREE: TOMB STORIES

In this brief interlude, the PCs take Alastor Land's bones from area 23 of the Whispering Cairn to his family's private graveyard, on a farmstead about 10 minutes east of Diamond Lake. Before young Alastor's ghost allows the PCs to proceed through the Whispering Cairn he wants them to bury his remains with those of his family, so that his curse can be lifted and he can move on to the afterworld.

The seemingly easy mission takes a challenging turn when the PCs visit the family graveyard and discover that the bodies of Alastor's father, mother, brother, and sister have been removed recently and taken off to places unknown. Investigation of the Land farmhouse leads to an exciting battle with a wounded owlbear and turns up clues implicating a gang of toughs in service to the mine manager Balabar Smenk, leading directly to Part Four: The Gang.

The Land Family Graveyard

A copse of immense deklo trees shades a small, quiet clearing just where Alastor said it would be, about 10 minutes east of Diamond Lake. Crumbling walls and a seemingly abandoned farmhouse stand vigil atop a small bluff overlooking the clearing, the sad ruins of what must once have been Alastor's home. Five grave markers stand in the clearing, each with a different name: Anders, Bemissa, Coldaran, Gertia, and Alastor. Open pits yawn from before all five headstones. Piles of fresh dirt and a pair of abandoned shovels suggest that the excavation took place recently, certainly within the week.

Alastor's father Anders died a year before the boy ran away from home. His mother, Bemissa, his older brother Coldaran, and his younger sister Gertia all succumbed to the Red Death plague that swept through the region 19 years ago. A DC 10 Heal or Knowledge (history) check identifies the four-petaled flower motif on their graves as a symbol commonly associated with victims of that wretched disease. The grave markers read as follows: **Anders Land:** 531–564 CY; **Bemissa Land:** 534–576 CY; **Coldaran Land:** 550–576 CY; **Gertia Land:** 563–576 CY; **Alastor Land:** 552–. For frame of reference, Alastor ran away from home in 565 CY.

A DC 9 Search check made near the graves reveals the tracks of a wheelbarrow leading toward Diamond Lake. A DC 10 Survival check made by a character with the Track feat turns up the tracks of five booted Medium humans who walked all around the graves and eventually dug them up. Shortly after they looted the graves, the men who left these tracks walked off to explore the farmstead. Four of them seem to have come back very quickly, leaving for the road immediately thereafter.

All of the graves have been emptied (except Alastor's, which was empty in the first place); their contents have been delivered to a necromancer named Filge who recently moved into an old observatory in Diamond Lake. Until these bones are returned to the graves, Alastor cannot escape from his curse. Connecting the empty graves to Filge takes more evidence than is available here. For that, the PCs need to explore the Land farmhouse on the bluff overlooking the graveyard.

The Land Farmstead (EL 3)

The dilapidated Land farmstead consists of a crumbled wall and a sagging, unsafe house with broken windows and a sagging roof. Thick, sludgy puddles of dried blood and unidentifiable fleshy chunks litter the wooden floor immediately inside the front door.

Creatures: Between the wall and the stairs leading to the collapsed second floor lurks an enraged female owlbear, still wounded from the battle with Balabar Smenk's agents that left her mate and three of her cubs dead. A single baby owlbear survived, and the mother protects it with her life.

Wounded Owlbear: hp 52 (currently 22); *Monster Manual* 206.

Treasure: A baby owlbear, still less than a year old, lurks in a corner of the north wall. It bonds to any character that touches it, thereafter following that character obediently. A DC 10 Knowledge (nature) check reveals that baby owlbears can fetch as much as 3,000 gp from collectors who train them to become effective guardian beasts. Although its large eyes and soft pelt make it an endearing pet or mascot, the creature is at heart a feral

monster, and isn't above attempting to bite off fingers or gnaw into a companion's leg. Owlbears are impossible to domesticate, so PCs hoping to keep this creature will soon find it far more trouble than it is worth.

Development: A DC 10 Search check of the Land farmhouse turns up a complete human arm with a unique tattoo identical to the one shown on the illustration of the half-orc Kullen on page 54. A DC 10 Knowledge (local) check identifies the symbol as that of Garavin Vesst, a greedy mine manager who branded his employees with it as a badge of status. Vesst was bankrupted by Balabar Smenk years ago, and died early last year. The branded workers were little more than slaves to Garavin Vesst, and view their current service to Smenk as a privilege. A DC 15 Gather Information check suggests that the gang commonly frequents the Feral Dog, a despicable tavern in the most dangerous part of Diamond Lake. The arm formerly belonged to a rogue named Skutch. The rest of him is in the wounded owlbear's stomach.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: Due to its wounds, the owlbear counts as a CR 3 creature for the purposes of awarding experience points.

PART FOUR: THE FERAL DOG

Once they discover the tattooed arm at the Land farmstead, the PCs are on the trail of Balabar Smenk's gang of reprobates. About a week ago, the five-man gang helped one of Smenk's associates from the Free City, a debased necromancer named Filge, move into an old observatory on the bluff overlooking Diamond Lake. Balabar gave the gang strict instructions to help Filge acquire whatever he needed to feel at home at the observatory, but the wizard's first request set the criminals on edge and infuriated their leader, an albino half-orc barbarian named Kullen. Filge needed one thing more than any other—skeletons to serve as guardians and assistants.

Knowing that the Diamond Lake Boneyard was under the protection of cultists sworn to Wee Jas, Kullen grudgingly led his followers on a tour of abandoned farmsteads on the outskirts of town, hoping to find a few private graves that the gang could dig up without attracting undue attention. All five of the criminals resented the work, considering grave robbing beneath them.

Things grew considerably worse when, after digging up all five Land graves (and finding Alastor's empty of remains) two nights ago, an inquisitive rogue named Skutch convinced the rest of the gang to explore the Land farmhouse.

Inside, they found a pair of mated owlbears. Four of the criminals—Kullen, Rastophan, Todrik, and Merovinn Bask—managed to escape with their lives. All that remains of poor Skutch is his severed, tattooed arm.

All four of the remaining cultists bear a tattoo identical to the one depicted on Kullen's forehead in the illustration on page 54. Only Kullen's is on his forehead. Other tattoos mark hands, shoulders, and other areas generally covered by clothing and armor.

A DC 15 Gather Information check suggests that the best place to contact the gang is at the Feral Dog, a seedy tavern detailed in the "Backdrop: Diamond Lake" article elsewhere in this issue. A map of the Feral Dog and a rough outline of important locations within is included in this chapter. Kullen's gang arrives at the Feral Dog each night around 8:00 PM, and leaves in a drunken stupor about three hours past Midnight (treat drunk characters as sickened for the purposes of this encounter).

The PCs might discover the location of the Land remains a number of different ways. The criminals have a starting attitude

of unfriendly toward the PCs, and certainly don't shy away from conflict if attacked.

Bribery: All of the criminals were wounded badly in the fight against the owlbear, and all of them deeply resent having been sent on the mission in the first place. They strongly dislike Filge, who treated them like servants, and they're starting to suspect (correctly) that Balabar Smenk might not have their best interests in mind. If even one of the criminal's attitudes can be changed to friendly, the gang accepts a bribe of not less than 200 gp to reveal that they delivered the bones to a "crazy old goat named Filge" who's living in the old observatory (area 35 on the Diamond Lake poster map). They do not reveal Smenk's involvement, and warn the PCs against digging too deep. "Just get your bones and get out of there," they helpfully suggest. If a gang member can be approached individually, his attitude need only be changed to indifferent to pave the way for a bribe. In this case, the criminal keeps the full bribe for himself.

Flattery: If all of the criminals' attitudes can be changed to friendly by a PC using Diplomacy to reinforce their belief that they have been used by uncaring employers, Kullen himself tells the PCs about the grave robbery and the delivery of the bones to the necromancer Filge. "Do me a personal favor," he says with a broken-toothed smile. "Bring me back that thin bastard's eyes." If the PCs fail to follow-through on this request, Kullen eventually becomes hostile toward them, perhaps turning into a long-term enemy in the campaign who advances in level as the PCs do.

Fight!: Of course, the PCs could just attack the gang and attempt to get the information from them by force. See below for details on each gang member and tips on how to use the gang in combat.

The Feral Dog Map Key

1. Taproom
2–5. Staff quarters
6. Kitchen
7. Spirits storage
8. Stairs
9. Storage
10. Private meeting room
11. Office
12. Premium dogfight seating
13. Office of the kennel keeper
14. Ready room
15. Kennel
16. Raw meat storage
17. Private meeting room
18. Vaults and planning office

Balabar Smenk's Gang (EL 6)

The statistics below cover everything you need to run a combat against Smenk's indentured criminals. As an EL 6 encounter, this fight should prove to be very challenging unless the PCs manage to battle on their own terms, setting up an ambush or isolating members of the gang from each other and taking them out one at a time.

Kullen: This towering albino half-orc commands the respect of everyone at the Feral Dog, where his rages are legendary. He is still upset about the disaster at the Land farmstead, and is eager for an unfair fight to work off some pent-up aggression.

Rastophan: A wiry goon from the southern swamps, Rastophan's long, clumpy black hair hangs down over his large eyes, giving him a sullen look. He rarely speaks and gets most of his guidance from Kullen.

Todrik: This corrupt fighter was born into servitude to Garavin Vesst, and views Balabar Smenk as his savior from a life in the mines. He has short brown hair cut into a flat-top. An angry red scar marks the left side of his sneering face from the forehead to the tip of the chin.

Merovinn Bask: This bald, ill-tempered wizard simply can't believe that his debts forced him into servitude in the first place, and views each day as an absolute disgrace. Bask is by far the rudest of Kullen's men. The only friend he ever had was the unfortunate Skutch.

KULLEN **CR 3**

Half-orc barbarian 3
NE Medium humanoid (orc)
Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Spot –1, Listen +5
Languages Common, Orc

AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; uncanny dodge
hp 31 (3 HD)
Fort +5, **Ref** +2, **Will** +0

Spd 40 ft.
Melee +1 *greataxe* +7 (1d12+5/x3)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +6
Attack Options Cleave, Power Attack
Special Attack Rage 1/day
Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds, potion of jump, potion of mage armor*

Abilities Str 17, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 10
SQ fast movement, illiteracy, trap sense +1, uncanny dodge
Feats Cleave, Power Attack
Skills Intimidate +6, Jump +13, Listen +5
Possessions combat gear, +1 *greataxe*, 3 gp
Rage (Ex): When he rages, Kullen has the following changed statistics:
AC 9, touch 9, flat-footed 8
hp 37 (3 HD)
Fort +7, **Will** +2
Melee +1 *greataxe* +9 (1d12+8/x3)
Grp +9
Abilities Str 19, Con 18
Skills Jump +15

RASTOPHAN **CR 2**

Human ranger 2
N Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** Spot +6, Listen +6
Languages Common

AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15
hp 16 (2 HD)
Fort +5, **Ref** +4, **Will** +1

Spd 30 ft.
Melee mwk longsword +6 (d8+2/19–20) or mwk longsword +4 (d8+2/19–20) and short sword +3 (d6+1/19–20)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +4
Attack Options favored enemy humanoid (human) +2
Combat Gear *potion of bull's Strength, potion of cure moderate wounds*

Abilities Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10
SQ wild empathy +4
Feats Track[B], Run, Two Weapon Fighting[B], Weapon Focus (longsword)
Skills Climb +6, Handle Animal +5, Jump +6, Listen +6, Spot +6, Survival +6
Possessions combat gear, +1 *chain shirt*, masterwork longsword, short sword, 7 gp

TODRIK **CR 2**

Human fighter 2
NE Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** Spot +2, Listen +2
Languages Common, Orc

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16
hp 19 (2 HD)
Fort +6, **Ref** +2, **Will** +1

Spd 20 ft.
Melee mwk guisarme +6 (2d4+3/x3)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +4
Attack Options Combat Expertise, Improved Trip
Combat Gear *potion of bull's Strength, potion of cure light wounds, potion of shield of faith +2*

Abilities Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 8
Feats Combat Expertise[B], Combat Reflexes, Improved Trip[B], Weapon Focus (guisarme)
Skills Craft (pottery) +4, Craft (woodworking) +4, Listen +2, Intimidate +3, Spot +2
Possessions combat gear, banded mail, masterwork guisarme, *cloak of resistance* +1, 41 gp

THE PORTENT

by Peter Bergting

HEY, IS THAT THE NEW WIZTOP 17'? 1.56 MAGICHERTZ? WHAT ARE YOU DOING? PLAYING WORLD OF SHORECRAFT?
ONLINE DATING. CAN'T GET THE HANG OF THE INTERFACE.
AWESOME! EVERYBODY LIES ON THEIR APPLICATIONS! I'M SURE YOU PUT DOWN TALL AND HANDSOME! LEMME SEE! LEMME SEE!
I'M A LONELY MAN OK!!! BUGGER OFF YOU LITTLE SPARKLER! I HAVE A DATE SOON!
THIS DID NOT TURN OUT THE WAY I HAD ENVISIONED IT...

THE PORTENT © '05 BERGTING

Merovinn Bask **CR 2**
Male human enchanter 2
NE Medium humanoid
Init +6; **Senses** Spot +2, Listen +2
Languages Common, Draconic, Orc

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10
hp 7 (2 HD)
Fort +1, **Ref** +4, **Will** +3

Spd 30 ft.
Melee dagger +0 (1d4–1/19–20)
Ranged masterwork light crossbow +4 (1d8/19–20)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +0
Combat Gear *wand of ray of enfeeblement* (17 charges), scroll of *shield*, *potion of cure light wounds*
Spells Prepared (CL 2nd, +3 ranged touch)
1st—*charm person* (DC 14), *color spray* (DC 13), *mage armor*, *sleep* (DC 14)
0—*daze* (DC 13), *detect magic* (2), *resistance*, *acid splash*
Barred Schools evocation and transmutation

Abilities Str 8, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 13
SQ summon familiar
Feats Alertness (when Rascal is within arm's reach), Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (enchantment)
Skills Concentration +6, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +7, Spellcraft +9
Possessions combat gear, masterwork crossbow with 20 bolts, *brooch of shielding* (35 charges), 2gp
Spellbook as above plus 0—all except evocation and transmutation, 1st—*shield*, *obscuring mist*, *identify*, *hypnotism*, *disguise self*

Rascal, weasel familiar: hp 3; *Monster Manual* 282.

Development: If the PCs don't manage to cajole or bribe the location of the Land remains out of Balabar Smenk's henchmen, you can still move the action along by staging follow-up encounters with Kullen and his brutes. They don't appreciate the questions the PCs have been asking around town, and decide to rough them up. Give the PCs a good chance to win one of these battles, which will place them in the position of getting whatever information they want from the defeated albino half-orc and his gang of reprobates.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs manage to learn of Filge from Kullen's without resorting to combat, award them XP as if they had defeated a CR 4 creature.

PART FIVE: THE OLD OBSERVATORY

About a century ago, Diamond Lake's crumbling observatory hosted a scientific cult devoted to studying the heavens and celestial bodies. The sect died out decades ago, and the place has since been inhabited by a series of questionable tenants who never seem to last very long. The latest is Filge, a deranged necromancer from the Free City summoned to Diamond Lake by his old associate Balabar Smenk, a local paragon of corruption described in the Backdrop: Diamond Lake article elsewhere in this issue. Two weeks ago, Filge received a package from Smenk filled with a thousand pieces of gold and hints of "unkillable" undead in the hills around Diamond Lake.

When at last Filge arrived, Smenk laid out a series of confusing events that hinted at a bizarre conspiracy hatched in secret chambers below Diamond Lake. One of Smenk's rival mine managers, a taciturn business-minded dwarf named Ragnolin Dourstone, came to Smenk with a covert offer of alliance. Dourstone explained that one of his crews had discovered an unusual chamber below his copper mine, and that a cadre of students and mystics had set up shop there at his invitation. Dourstone asked Smenk to run secret food shipments to this subterranean force, keeping the whole affair from the attention of Diamond Lake's militia garrison or the office of Governor-Mayor Lanod Neff (and hence the perceptive directors of the Free City). In exchange, the dwarf offered Smenk a fair contract and three beautiful obsidian rings, said to have been unearthed within this secret chamber—the so-called "Black Cathedral." Smenk agreed, but only if Dourstone would consent to let him visit the Cathedral himself.

What Smenk saw there terrified him, an emotion he'd thought purged since he strangled his first city watchman. An oppressive aura of despair surged from a large pool of black slime in the Cathedral's central chamber. Three circles of robed figures ringed the pool, their faces touching the cold mosaic floor. Through robes and hoods Smenk spied inhuman appendages—twitching tails and hints of oily black feathers. Their chants echoed off basalt walls like a chorus of croaking frogs and screaming children.

Worst of all, Ragnolin Dourstone acted as if nothing was amiss, politely leading Smenk on a tour through a bizarre labyrinth while outlining what sort of provisions he required and when he would expect Smenk's agents to make delivery so as to arouse the least suspicion. "All must be prepared," Dourstone said without a hint of emotion, "for the Age of Worms is upon us."

Smenk had never heard of the Age of Worms, but knew a clue when he saw one. While touring what appeared to be an arcanist's laboratory, Smenk noticed a jar containing a segmented green worm suspended in nutritive fluid. He gingerly absorbed the jar into his *glove of storing* and continued following his rival, taking in his surroundings and planning a hasty escape should things grow any stranger.

In a chamber beyond the labyrinth Smenk met the master of the Black Cathedral, a masked wizard called the Faceless One. Unintimidated by Smenk's political clout, the lisping, crooked man dictated new terms of the provisioning arrangement. "Now that you see what we are capable of," he wheezed, "you understand why secrecy must be maintained. Secrecy allows us to continue our studies and liturgies in the name of the Ebon Triad. Without secrecy, we are lost. We will kill to preserve it."

Smenk understood the subtext, and agreed to the provisioning deal without mentioning that the arrangement would drive him into penury. He escaped the mine with his life but had shackled himself to a disastrous agreement with a dangerous inhuman cult. Armed with his bottled worm and tales of undead in the hills, he sent for Filge and put up his old friend in Diamond Lake's moribund observatory.

"The Three Faces of Evil," next month's Age of Worms Adventure Path installment, focuses on the exploration of the Dourstone Mine and exposure of Balabar Smenk's illegal dealings. The events in this chapter act as a bridge to the next adventure, and should be handled with care.

Because Filge has no idea that the PCs are coming, they have him at a considerable disadvantage. When staging this encounter,

draw out an exterior floorplan and carefully explain the surroundings to your players. This will encourage them to come up with a plan of attack rather than charging in through the front door, which in this case could have disastrous consequences.

Once the PCs reach the old observatory, continue with the following:

Five minutes north of Diamond Lake, on a bluff overlooking an abandoned mine, a crumbling old observatory casts its gaze to the heavens. A wide slit bisects its domed tower, where surely a great telescope once peered into eternity. Now the place bears a dark character, like a sagging tenement broken under the weight of decades of inhabitants. A slim stairway cut into the steep hillside leads to the structure's only door, on the side of the tower's attached one-story outbuilding. Flickering light filters through the observatory's only windows, along the tower's second and third floors.

1. Landing (EL 2)

The stairway rises to a wide landing and two huge wooden doors. Shot through with dark blue mold, the doors form an enormous round moon carved with a lunatic's jabbering face. Beneath the landing, an unremarkable wooden door appears to lead to a tool closet under the stairs.

The massive moon-face doors are held shut with a simple lock (Open Lock DC 20). If this check fails by 5 or more, the skeletons in area 2 hear the commotion and automatically gain surprise against the PCs.

The small door below the landing leads to a grubby tool closet. It too is locked with a simple lock (Open Lock DC 20). The closet is home to a tomb mote, a Tiny undead creature composed of bone shards, matted hair, bits of shattered tombstone, dirt, and rotting, mismatched teeth. Filge uses tomb motes as messengers when needed. One of these creatures is currently delivering a message to Balabar Smenk, and might be encountered in the next adventure. The other remains in the closet, and immediately attacks anyone but Filge who opens the door.

Tomb Mote CR 2
CE Tiny undead (*Libris Mortis* 128)
Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +1, Spot +1
Languages understands Common and Abyssal but does not speak

AC 18, touch 15, flat-footed 15
Hp 13 (3 HD); **DR** 2/cold iron or magic
Immune undead traits
Fort +1, **Ref** +5, **Will** +4

Spd 20 ft. (4 squares), swim 20 ft.
Melee bite +6 (1d4–1 plus disease)
Space 2-1/2 ft. **Reach** 0 ft.
Base Atk +1; Grp –8
Special Atk disease

Abilities Str 8, Dex 17, Con —, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 14
SQ quickness, undead traits
Feats Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse
Skills Hide +12, Move Silently +4
Disease (Ex): A creature struck by a tomb mote's bite attack must make a DC 13 Fortitude save or be infected with a disease known as corpse bloat (incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d6 Str). The skin of a diseased victim turns a hue of green, bloats, and is warm to the touch. The save DC is Charisma-based.
Quickness (Su): A tomb mote is supernaturally quick. It can take an extra standard action or move action during its turn each round.

Campaign Seed: The Ebon Triad

From the fanatical peripheries of three vile churches comes a blasphemous doctrine known as the Way of the Ebon Triad, an anonymously penned collection of essays and scrolls soaked in phantasmagoric allegory and apocalyptic ecstasy. The Way outlines in vague terms a series of rituals and portentous events that culminate in the spiritual and physical adhesion of Hextor, Erythnul, and Vecna into a single supremely powerful overgod. Outlaws even within their own blasphemous religions, adherents to the Way of the Ebon Triad travel the world in search of fellow wanderers, often banding together to influence important events and edge the world closer to catastrophe.

Last year, agents of the Ebon Triad conspired with another dangerous cult to trigger a volcanic eruption that nearly consumed the city of Cauldron, in the distant southern jungles. This event was a critical moment in the Shackled City Adventure Path (published last year in *Dungeon* and this summer as a hardcover from Paizo Publishing), but to the Ebon Triad it was merely one of a handful of prophesized events presaging the advent of the Age of Worms, an era of darkness and writhing death that would provide the required backdrop for the ascension of their tripartite god.

What the Ebon Triad cultists below Diamond Lake and throughout the world do not understand is that the entire religious movement is a fraud launched at the direction of Kyuss, an ancient being who has plotted to bring about the Age of Worms for millennia. The scope of this fraud and the true goals of Kyuss will be revealed in future Age of Worms Adventure Path installments.

Use the following chart to adjudicate the results of Knowledge (religion) checks made to learn more about the Ebon Triad.

Knowledge (religion) DC	Information known
15	The Ebon Triad is an evil cult dedicated to merging the gods Hextor, Vecna, and Erythnul into a mighty overgod.
20	Adherents to the doctrine of the Ebon Triad clutch close their secrets even from worshipers of Hextor, Erythnul, and Vecna, who consider them heretics. In fact, word of the heresy has not spread far from these three churches, who keep accounts of Ebon Triad activities brutally suppressed lest the cult gain more converts.
25	Despite the internecine struggle between the Ebon Triad and the orthodox churches, clerics of Hextor, Erythnul, and Vecna in thrall to the cult continue to receive spells from their godly patrons. This fact especially galls the church of Hextor, whose rigid faith cannot square the contradiction.
30	The idea that a human cult could bind gods as powerful as Hextor, Vecna, and Erythnul is extremely doubtful, even preposterous.
35	The Ebon Triad hopes to bring about the Age of Worms as a precursor to the creation of its terrible god, and has its hands in apocalyptic conspiracies across the land. Perhaps the gods support these rebel clerics because they too wish to see the world cast in darkness?

2. Watchers in the Dark (EL 1)

Furniture fragments, smashed planks, broken glass, and other detritus cram this large antechamber. At the west end of the room, several upended tables form a crude barricade. Closed doors mark the north and west walls.

Creatures: Three of Alastor Land's relatives, now animated skeletons in thrall to the odious necromancer Filge, guard this chamber and the observatory's only exit. The skeletons hide behind a wooden table barricade in the last rank of squares along the western wall. Each wields a heavy crossbow armed with a greasy, poison-tipped bolt and kneels beside an identical loaded crossbow and a scimitar. If the PCs make a lot of noise getting through the front door, the skeletons gain a surprise round against them the moment the door is opened. They use this round to fire their in-hand crossbows at any visible PC. The upturned tables grant the skeletons cover (+4 to AC). Due to the junk littering the floor, all of the squares in the room are considered difficult terrain.

Skeletons (3): hp 6; heavy crossbow+1 ranged; 1d10/19–20 and poison (Medium centipede poison; injury DC 15; 1d4 Str/1d4 Str); *Monster Manual* 225.

Development: The skeletons are two adults and a young adult—Alastor's father Anders, his mother Bemissa, and his brother Coldaran. Bemissa and Coldaran's skeletons show slight deformities that a DC 15 Heal check identifies as signs of the Red Death, a plague that swept through Diamond Lake 19 years ago (matching the date on their gravestones).

3. Abandoned Office

Pushing open the warped wooden door to this chamber requires a DC 10 Strength check. The room beyond appears to have once been an office, but it does not look like it has been used in years.

4. Cenobitic Chambers

This simple chamber hosts a plain bed, a small open footlocker, and an unremarkable wooden dresser.

These tiny rooms once housed the monks who lived in the observatory. Each is slightly different from the next, as if the interiors have been customized by a succession of tenants. They have not been used for more than a decade.

Treasure: A DC 20 Search check in the easternmost room reveals a cleverly hidden pouch dangling behind a dresser drawer. The pouch contains 6 pp and 5 gp.

5. Feasting Hall

The revolting stench of rotting flesh roils from the open door. In the room beyond, ten chairs surround an oblong dining table situated parallel to the door. Along the north wall, a wide staircase leads to an upper floor. A wooden door below the stairs presumably leads to a slim chamber. Two doors line the south wall. A sagging antique wooden shelf dominates the west wall, looking like it might collapse at any moment.

Three tall candles on the dining table illuminate a sight of terror. With the exception of the place at the western end, each of the chairs surrounding the table holds

an awkwardly seated humanoid figure. The nine bodies are in various stages of decomposition. Some sit with splendid posture, paused as if midway through a sumptuous feast. Others slump treacherously close to the floor.

Heaping plates of apparently fresh food sit before each of the diners, but the empty place setting features a clean plate and set of utensils. Several bottles of red wine rest upon the table, and each of the corpses sits before a half-finished glass. A fly passes nearby, its there-not-there buzz breaking the eerie silence.

Creatures: Characters who make a successful DC 10 Spot check notice slight movements in some of the corpses at the table, suggesting they may be animated. All nine of the guests are zombies, but the creatures make no attempt to waylay the party. In fact, they do not interact with the PCs in any way unless a PC sits in the empty chair at the head of the table. When this happens, all of the zombies spring to life and begin acting out a formal dinner party. The undead diners lack the precision necessary to slice their food, and merely go through the motions of eating. The whole thing has the atmosphere of a grotesque pantomime.

Seconds after the feast begins, a zombie turns to look directly at the seated PC, and comments (via a *magic mouth*): "Once again, milord has provided a delicious meal," it says in an accent tinged with the airs of nobility. "It is an honor to dine in your august presence."

Thereafter, other diners chime in with sycophantic comments of their own. "The Guild of Wizardry was wrong to turn you out," a male elf corpse remarks. "You ought to show them like you showed me." The tattered remains of what must once have been a young woman speak up next. "I shouldn't have ever doubted you, Filge," it says earnestly. "I always loved you when we were together. Now I will love you forever." Conversation continues along these lines until the seated PC stands up, at which point the production comes to a close and the zombies "reset" to their beginning positions. Each time a character sits at the head of the table, the script begins again.

Zombies (9): hp 6.

Treasure: The rotting shelves along the west wall hold a set of silver dining utensils worth 200 gp.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: Since these zombies do not fight back, award no experience points for their defeat.

6. Kitchen

The kitchen contains an enormous wheel of cheese, a moldy loaf of bread, and several strips of stringy cured meat—salted swine hearts imported from the neighboring town of Steaming Springs. Filge's shoddy cutlery might fetch 10 gp in town.

7. Pantry

A small closet off the kitchen's west wall holds a handful of spices and dry food favored by Filge. His diet portrays a lack of depth or creativity, and most of the shelves here are empty.

8. Storage Closet

This simple storage closet holds four extra chairs and eight copper candle stands worth 5 gp each.

9. Bedchamber

The stairs lead to a massive bedchamber that fills an entire floor of the observatory tower. Light filtering in from the tall windows ringing the chamber catches motes of dust in the calm air. A fine bed with plump red linen sheets squats upon a dais along the southeast cradle of the tower's arc. A nightstand next to the bed holds a wax-choked candlestick and a black book bound with brown and red leather.

At the midpoint of the eastern wall a strange form stands rigid atop a short wooden stool, as tall as a halfling and clothed in a fine black suit and tophat. Clean cloth bandages wrap every inch of the sentry's skin. A pair of ash-tinted spectacles rests upon a long skinny nose. The diminutive dandy holds a silver platter as if presenting a meal, and upon the tray rests the freshly preserved severed head of a middle-aged human woman. A platinum piece sits upon her outstretched, purple tongue.

A messy desk rests against the opposite wall, piled high with loose papers. An apparatus holding four long tubes filled with colored liquid peeks out from the clutter. Doors on the north and west walls appear to lead to small closets.

Wide stairs lead above and below. A massive white stone statue of a thin human man with outstretched angelic wings and a beatific look upon his idealized face looms large in the northwest arc of the tower wall. The angel holds a sword in one hand and cradles a harp with the other. The presentation conjures thoughts of mausoleum peaks or the graves of important men. Tall letters etched upon the statue's base spell out a single word: "Filge."

The ceiling in this chamber is 15 feet high rather than the standard 10 feet common in the rest of the observatory.

On the rare occasions when he is not experimenting in his upstairs laboratory, Filge can be found brooding here upon some half-finished project or laboring over notes and calculations at his desk. He tends to work upstairs until about midnight, at which point he winds down with another two hours of reading and meditation here in his bedroom.

The roof of the observatory's attached outbuilding provides walk-up access to the windows looking in on this room. Medium and smaller characters can slide through the windows with ease. Larger characters or creatures wearing bulky armor must take a full minute to squeeze through. Note that it's possible to catch Filge sleeping. In these cases, the wizard's owl familiar keeps watch from a perch on the candlestick on the nightstand next to the bed. The bird makes Spot checks at a +14 bonus, and screeches wildly if it sees an intruder. See area 9 for suggestions regarding Filge's tactics and statistics. He keeps his syringes on the nightstand while sleeping, so he's never far from a weapon.

The halfling "statue" is really a mummified goblin dressed in a fine suit and hat that doubles as a noble's outfit for Small characters. The corpse is long dead, but has been chemically preserved to prevent decomposition. This process also

preserves the female human head on the silver platter. Touching the head in any way triggers a *magic mouth* that screams "INTRUDER! INTRUDER! INTRUDER!" This instantly alerts Filge to the presence of interlopers in his bedchamber.

The angelic figure is an idealized representation of Filge himself.

Treasure: Filge's spellbook rests upon the nightstand next to the bed. It contains the following spells: 0—*detect magic, disguise self, disrupt undead, ray of frost, read magic, touch of fatigue*; 1st—*cause fear, chill touch, identify, mage armor, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement*; 2nd—*command undead, magic mouth, scare, spectral hand, touch of idiocy*.

The silver tray held by the mummified sentry is worth 50 gp. The blackened glass spectacles upon the goblin's nose effectively block glare from bright lights (including the sun) and grant a +2 circumstance bonus on Will saves to resist *daze* or similar effects. The right customer might pay 75 gp for the pair. A large rug of golden brown fur is worth 200 gp, but must be carried carefully to ensure that its coat does not become soiled. A DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) check identifies the pelt as that of an adult lammasu.

Most of the papers on Filge's desk concern surgical procedures meant to enhance the potency of undead, while others contain only the meandering scribbles of a mind descending into madness. Buried in with the junk is a scroll of *animate dead* and a beaker holder containing four 6-inch-long tubes filled with different-colored liquids. Two of the six slots are empty. The glass tubes are sealed at the top with a rubber sheath, and look like they are meant to be slotted into some other device. Each contains a soupy liquid substance consisting of reanimated cells. Filge has been experimenting with injecting these liquids into himself. They are effectively a *potion of gentle repose* (milky blue), *potion of false life* (deep red), *potion of ghoul touch* (sallow yellow), and *potion of chill touch* (white with black streaks). Every so often, something within the beakers seems to move slightly, but it might just be a trick of the eye. A handwritten label on the beaker holder says "Necroturgons."

Also on the desk is the original summons Balabar Smenk sent Filge to encourage him to come to Diamond Lake (see handout).

10. Closet

These closets contain Filge's wardrobe, which consists of six sets of nearly identical sleeveless long coats worn over a shirt and breeches. If the PCs take several minutes to completely ransack the closets, they rummage 13 gp worth of coins from various pockets and pouches.

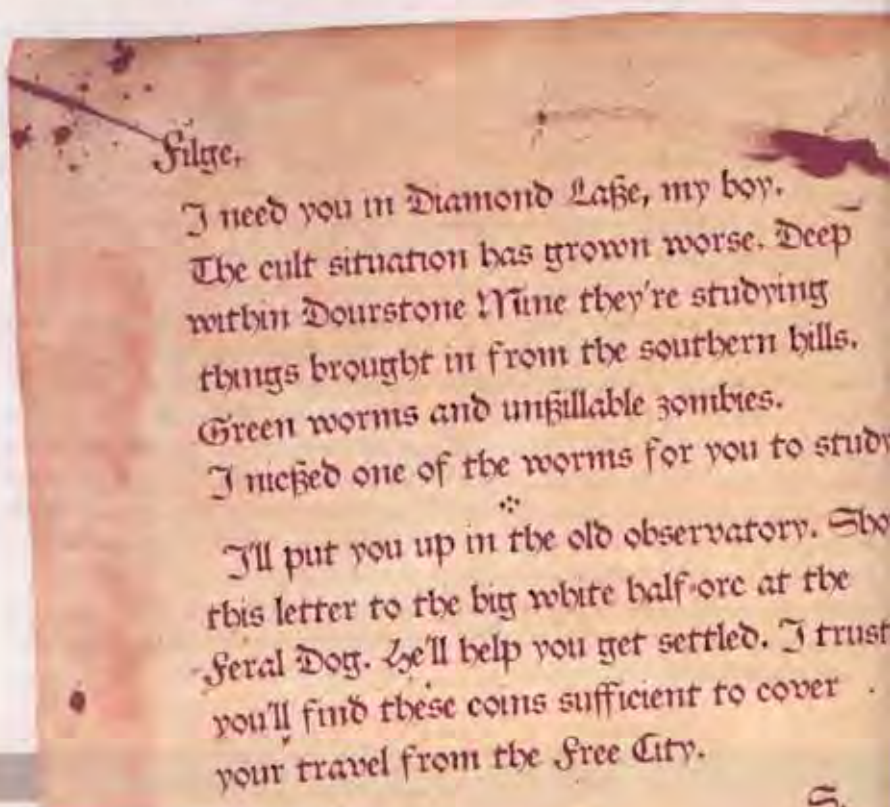
11. Operating Theater (EL 5)

A single chamber dominates the observatory's entire upper floor. Light filters through the wide slit in the roof, bathing the center of the room in illumination. Four large mirrors set along the outside wall reflect bright beams into the direct center of the room, a recessed operating theater accessible via two short sets of stairs. The beams specifically target a blue-skinned humanoid figure splayed out upon an operating table, its chest completely opened and pinned back against the table with long metal needles. Two long shelves cluttered with piles of papers, rotting organs, and instruments comprise the east and west extent of the operating theater, and are only a few inches lower than the chamber's outer floor.

Four metal-and-glass tanks, each easily large enough to hold a human, flank the short stairs leading to the operating theater. Each tank is full of yellow liquid streaked with rust. Indistinct, vaguely human silhouettes bob silently in the soupy fluid.

The gigantic telescope that gave the observatory its purpose was looted from the structure decades ago, leaving only a 5-ft. recessed floor at the center of the chamber where the great device once rested. Filge has repurposed this area as his operating theater, packing it with the tools of his macabre trade as well as some of his favorite success stories. The corpse currently laid out on the operating table is an experiment that Filge hopes one day soon to animate as a powerful zombie. Right now it's just a dead human whose skin has been dyed blue with an artificial additive of Filge's own design.

Creatures: Assuming the PCs employ stealth, they may access this room without Filge's knowledge, catching him unawares as he conducts magical-medical experiments on the corpse upon his operating table. As he stitches and saws, the sallow-skinned necromancer sings a dreadful melody in the hoarse, hacking voice of an addict. He moves to attack at the first sight of intruders, pulling up short only if con-


Filge,

I need you in Diamond Lake, my boy. The cult situation has grown worse. Deep within Dourstone Mine they're studying things brought in from the southern hills. Green worms and unkillable zombies. I mailed one of the worms for you to study

I'll put you up in the old observatory. Show this letter to the big white half-orc at the Feral Dog. He'll help you get settled. I trust you'll find these coins sufficient to cover your travel from the Free City.

S.

fronted by a truly impressive display (such as the head of Kullen or all of the zombies from area 9 in thrall to a PC). Even then, Filge negotiates only if a PC makes a successful Intimidate check.

A 5-foot-tall human skeleton follows Filge everywhere he goes, acting as a mobile bookstand and dogsbody. This is poor Gertia Land, youngest of Alastor Land's siblings. A DC 15 Heal check identifies subtle deformities to her skull that are the hallmarks of the Red Death plague that swept Diamond Lake 19 years ago. The skeleton wears a rusty old scimitar in a belt scabbard and will use it at Filge's command.

The four tanks surrounding the recessed floor contain Filge's proudest accomplishments, hulking undead monstrosities created with *animate dead* scrolls and preserved for later use in a soupy yellow liquid streaked with ribbons of rust. Three of the tanks contain troglodyte zombies, while the southeast tank contains a brutish bald bugbear zombie. At Filge's command, these creatures burst forth from their tanks, wielding pipes wrenched from their glass and metal prisons as greatclubs.

Filge, Deranged Necromancer CR 3
Male human wizard (necromancer) 3
NE medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +1; +3 on Spot checks made in shadows
Languages Common, Elven, Infernal

AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 11
hp 15 (3 HD)
Fort +2, **Ref** +3, **Will** +4

Spd 30 ft. (6 squares)
Atk dagger +0 melee (1d4)
Base Atk +1; Grp +0
Combat Gear syringe of *potion of false life*, syringe of *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of cure light wounds*
Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 3rd; +3 ranged touch):
2nd—ghoul touch (DC 14), scare (DC 14), spectral hand
1st—chill touch (DC 13) (2), mage armor, ray of enfeeblement
0—disrupt undead, touch of fatigue (DC 12) (2), ray of frost
Barred Schools Abjuration and transmutation

Abilities Str 8, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 10
SQ summon familiar (Merrowahn)
Feats Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Scribe Scroll[B], Toughness
Skills Concentration +7, Decipher Script +4, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (religion) +8, Profession (mortician) +5, Spellcraft +10
Possessions combat gear, dagger, *amulet of natural armor +1* (bird skull on a leather thong), master key that opens all the locks in the observatory

Syringe: As a standard action, Filge can inject himself with a soupy magical solution similar to a potion. Each of his two syringes holds a single charge of this special liquid in a removable glass tube. Once emptied, the glass tubes (and the remaining four tubes on the desk in area 9) can be filled with any potion. While Filge uses the syringes to inject himself, they also make excellent delivery vehicles for poisons or potions administered to an unwilling recipient.

Merrowahn, owl familiar: hp 6; *Monster Manual* 277.

Troglodyte zombie (3): hp 29; *Monster Manual* 266.

Bugbear zombie: hp 42; *Monster Manual* 267.

Skeleton (Gertia Land): hp 6; *Monster Manual* 226.

Tactics: Use the suggested tactics below as a guideline on how to proceed with combat.

Round 1: As a free action, Filge gestures to the undead brutes in the fluid tanks surrounding his laboratory. "Arise, my beautiful monstrosities!" he calls out. As he does this, he double moves to gain cover from the most tactically advantageous tank. Gertia Land's skeleton positions itself between the PCs and the necromancer, scimitar drawn. She never moves more than 15 feet from the necromancer.

Round 2: Filge casts *mage armor* upon himself, raising his AC to 17. If he had any reason to suspect foul play prior to the arrival of the PCs, he has already cast this spell. He instead injects a *potion of false life* into himself to gain 1d10+3 temporary hit points.

The four zombies crash out of their tanks and move to form a wall between the PCs and Filge. If possible, they attack.

The skeleton attacks if possible or stands its ground and readies an attack against the next available foe.

Filge

Round 3: If it seems safe and he has not already done so, Filge injects himself with the *potion of false life*. Otherwise, he casts *spectral hand* (losing 1d4 hit points in the process) and taunts the PCs, declaring that they have made an enemy for life by violating his sanctuary. The undead attack available foes.

Round 4: Filge casts *ghoul touch* and uses his *spectral hand* to deliver a touch attack charged with the spell. Filge has a +2 melee attack bonus with the *spectral hand*, and can attack anyone within 130 feet. He first targets what he assumes to be wizards or sorcerers, moving on to bards or rogues if necessary. Otherwise, he targets characters in bulky armor, figuring that they will be easier to hit with a touch attack. If he misses the attack, he holds the charge and tries again the next round.

The monstrosities continue to attack. The skeleton continues to defend, attacking if presented with an adjacent foe.

Following Rounds: The undead continue to engage in melee with the PCs. Filge casts *chill touch* twice, delivered via the *spectral hand*. If an enemy gets too close, he casts *scare*. He reserves his *ray of enfeeblement* for any melee-oriented PC who seems to be doing well against the monstrosities.

Filge surrenders only when all of his undead creations have been destroyed or turned against him. He remains a pragmatist even in defeat; when he knows there is no way out, he blithely offers to "sell out Smenk completely" in exchange for his freedom. He lets the PCs keep whatever they want, so long as they let him go. If his attitude can be adjusted to friendly or better, he tells the PCs everything he knows about Balabar Smenk's operation in Diamond Lake, the Dourstone Mine, and the Ebon Triad. See Development below.

Treasure: Filge's fine silver operating instruments are worth 500 gp as a set. A 20 gp emerald is lodged in the throat of the corpse on the operating table. On one of the shelves flanking the operating table rests a glass tube about a foot long and half as wide. A slim green worm bobs in the murky chemical solution within the jar. A DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check identifies the segmented worm as part of an undead creature called a spawn of Kyuss. The sample is worth 10 gp to a sage or taxidermist. Flashing it around in Diamond Lake is a good way to attract the attention of the Ebon Triad.

The most important treasure in the room may be the bones of Gertia Land, which the PCs must return to the grave at the Land farmstead to appease the ghost of Alastor Land in area 23 of the Whispering Cairn.

Development: Presuming the PCs defeat Filge without killing him, they can learn a lot from the humiliated wizard. He doesn't volunteer information, but once cowed he responds thoroughly to direct questions, hoping that his honesty encourages the PCs to spare his miserable life. The following topic break-down will help you relate Filge's information to the PCs during a role-playing encounter.

Why Are You Here? "Me mate Balabar called me up from the Free City for a bit of study about some weirdness in town. He got himself brought down to a hidden part of the Dourstone Mines a month ago, to set up some provisioning deal with the dwarf what runs the place. But the mine was crawling with awful beasts in hooded robes. He said their wild cries made his stomach heave. The cultists—they called themselves the Ebon Triad—said something about the Age of Worms, about strange undead in the southern hills and the swamp. Smenk knew he had to prepare a defense, so he called in his undead expert. Me."

Why Did You Steal the Land Skeletons? "The who? I needed helpers, so I got Smenk's white half-orc to fetch the raw materials. I have no idea where he got them. Are you telling me you came here because of the skeletons? Curse that pink-eyed fiend!"

The Age of Worms: "The Age of Worms is the Waiting Age, an era of catastrophe that lurks in the shadows of every tomorrow. Scholars obsessed with apocalyptic visions claim that its advent signals an interminable period of suffering in which the cosmic scales shift disastrously toward evil and light fades from the land."

Balabar Smenk: "He and I were mates 20 years ago, in the Free City. I laugh now to think of how far he's come in so little time. How respectful people around here are toward him. Ha! If they only knew!"

The Dourstone Mine: "I think it's along the road east of here, but this hell-hole is your town, not mine. You tell me where it is. If you're going, best be careful. Smenk said the place scared him, which I wouldn't have thought possible before I heard him say it myself."

The Ebon Triad: "Smenk says the cult follows Hextor, Erythnul, and Vecna, the Lich-Lord of old. If true, the place must be crawling with delicious secrets. I'd love to accompany you if you intend to go."

The Green Worm: "Balabar nicked that jar from a laboratory in the Dourstone Mine. It's very rare. Dead now, of course, but once it and hundreds of worms like it must have wriggled within the abscesses and orifices of a powerful undead creature called a spawn of Kyuss. These are probably the 'unkillable' zombies the cultists mentioned to Smenk. If true, it could be a real problem. Those worms can get inside you and turn you undead in about a day."

Kyuss: "No one knows much. He appeared more than a thousand years ago in the Rift Canyon to the north. In a short time, he created dozens of new undead breeds and amassed a legion of creatures bound to his will. They say an undead dragon stood at his side as the general of this force. Now, only the green worms remain of his legacy. That and his title: Harbinger of the Age of Worms."

If the PCs release Filge he flees to the Free City, and may return to harry the PCs when they visit that metropolis later in the campaign. He's serious about his offer to help the PCs raid the Dourstone Mines. If they foolishly agree they learn to regret the mistake when the necromancer betrays them at a key moment. Consult next issue's "The Three Faces of Evil" for more details on the mine and the Ebon Triad.

With the Land family skeletons carefully interred in their graves, the PCs can finally return to the ghost of Alastor Land in area 23 of the Whispering Cairn.

Concluding the Adventure

The Whispering Cairn may be defeated, but the PCs still have plenty of unanswered questions. If things have gone according to plan, the party has reason to investigate the Dourstone Mine, which puts them directly on the trail of the next adventure in the Age of Worms Adventure Path. But don't rush your players to the next installment. They've just bested their first dungeon, and deserve an opportunity to spend their hard-earned cash and enjoy a celebration with their boon companions.

There's More: Download full-size handouts, maps, EBERRON and FORGOTTEN REALMS conversion appendices, and tips for scaling this adventure to higher levels at paizo.com/dungeon.

APPENDIX 1: NEW MONSTER

Wind Warrior

Medium Elemental (Air, Extraplanar)
Hit Dice: 6d8+12 (39 hp)
Initiative: +5
Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 80 ft. (good)
AC: 19 (+5 Dex, +4 natural), touch 15, flat-footed 14
Base Attack/Grapple: +4/+7
Attack: Longsword +8 melee (1d8+3/19–20)
Full Attack: 2 longswords +8 melee (1d8+3/19–20)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Sonic blast
Special Qualities: Body suffusion, darkvision 60 ft., elemental traits, superior two-weapon fighting
Saves: Fort +4, Ref +12, Will +2
Abilities: Str 16, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 11
Skills: Balance +7, Jump +4, Tumble +14
Feats: Dodge, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (longsword)
Environment: Any
Organization: Solitary or troupe (2–5)
Challenge Rating: 4
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: 7–18 HD (Medium)
Level Adjustment: —

An ancient suit of ceramic armor stands gracefully at attention, twin longswords gripped in its hands. Closer inspection reveals that the armor is empty, held together by hundreds of tiny uplifting gusts of vapor and wind.

Wind warriors served the Wind Dukes of Aaqa as shocktroopers in the ancient war against the Queen of Chaos. Suits of ceramic ceremonial plate armor and swords were infused with minor air spirits to create these graceful soldiers. The few who survive today are guardians for Wind Duke holdings and tombs such as the Whispering Cairn. When slain, a wind warrior's armor and weapons age thousands of years in an instant, and crumble to dust.

Wind warriors understand Auran, but cannot speak.

Combat

A wind warrior begins combat with a sonic blast before engaging in melee.

Sonic Blast (Su): As a standard action, a wind warrior can clang its longswords together to produce a discordant sonic blast in a 20-foot line. This effect deals 2d6 sonic damage to all within the area (Reflex DC 15 half). The save DC is Constitution-based.

Body Suffusion (Ex): A wind warrior's spirit keeps its body together. If disarmed, its weapon crumbles to dust. At any time thereafter, the wind warrior may generate a replacement weapon as a standard action.

Superior Two-Weapon Fighting (Ex): A wind warrior's essence suffuses its entire body, granting it supreme control over its movements. Wind warriors do not take a penalty on attack or damage rolls for attacking with two weapons.

Erik Mona is the Editor-in-Chief of DUNGEON. *He thanks Skip Williams, Douglas Niles, Carl Sargent, and Steve Miller, whose work in one way or another inspired this adventure.*

"The Whispering Cairn" and the Age of Worms Adventure Path is dedicated to E. Gary Gygax and Robert J. Kuntz. May the world never forget the adventures of Lord Robilar and the vexing danger of Castle Greyhawk.

Mt.Zogon
AS AN EXPERIENCED DRUID, I SHOULD HAVE ACQUIRED THE ABILITY TO SHAPECHANGE INTO AN ANIMAL BY NOW. READY TO WATCH ME TRY ?
MAY I PICK the ANIMAL?
OF COURSE !!
LET'S SEE A CAVE BEAR !
OKAY, GALEENA ...CONCENTRATE !
CAVE BEAR
CAVE BEAR
CAVE BEAR
SO, WHAT DO YOU THINK?
THAT YOU'VE NEVER SEEN A CAVE BEAR?
TONY MOSELEY
ZOGONIA.COM

Diamond Lake

BY ERIK MONA,
BY CHAD DU LAC & JIM ZUBKAVICH,
BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI,

At a perfumed arcade known as the Emporium, Governor-Mayor Lanod Neff rubs shoulders with common laborers awaiting an appointment in the Veiled Corridor. In an adjoining antechamber, snakes and exotic dancers gyre to a sonorous weave of cymbals and seductive pipes. A floor below, a gaggle of grasping miners presses against the windowed door of a darkened cell, impatient for a glimpse of a two-headed calf.

Out in the street, a gang of rowdies screams obscenities at a crumpled halfling, kicking it as if scrambling for a ball. Their drunken laughter echoes off shuttered windows and bolted doors.

In a tower-flanked fortress across the shadowy square, filthy men with nothing to lose shout hymns to St. Cuthbert, clutching to their idealism and principles like cornered animals. Their wild-eyed chief minister smiles as he draws a cat-o-nine-tails across his bare back, awash in their adulation and the spirit of his god.

But it's just another night in Diamond Lake.

The Age of Worms Adventure Path opens in the small mining town of Diamond Lake, where desperate folk toil in lightless depths for a pittance while corrupt mine managers live in relative largesse, ruthlessly scheming to undermine one another and protect their piece of the action. Most residents of Diamond Lake can be categorized into two groups: those with nowhere else to turn and those who have come to exploit them.

A garrison of sixty militia soldiers stands ready to defend the mines from bandits and rogue lizardfolk from the southern swamps. Rival cults share the same flock of potential converts only because the timing is not yet right for outright warfare. They muster their forces for the coming battle. Things are not safe in Diamond Lake, and a right-thinking person would have every reason to want to get out of town as soon as possible.

Enter the player characters. In the Age of Worms Adventure Path, all of the players begin play as residents of Diamond Lake who share one common goal—escaping to a better life once certain financial obligations have been met. This motivation binds the party on its first all-important adventure, and the character of Diamond Lake, as well as the portentous events that will occur there, will resonate in the lives of the PCs throughout every stage of the campaign.

A detailed section at the end of this article provides suggestions on how to integrate the player characters into Diamond Lake and how to use the town as

a launching point for the Age of Worms Adventure Path (or any other D&D campaign). But first, unfold the map provided with this issue of *Dungeon* and get familiar with your new home.

Diamond Lake in Brief

Diamond Lake nestles in the rocky crags of the Cairn Hills, three days east of the Free City to which it is subject. Iron and silver from Diamond Lake's mines fuel the capital's markets and support its soldiers and nobles with the raw materials necessary for weapons and finery. This trade draws hundreds of skilled and unskilled laborers and artisans, all hoping to strike it rich. In ages past, Diamond Lake boasted an export more valuable than metal in the form of treasure liberated from the numerous tombs and burial cairns crowding the hills around the town. These remnants of a half-dozen long-dead cultures commanded scandalous prices from the Free City elite, whose insatiable covetousness triggered a boom in the local economy. Those days are long gone, though. The last cairn in the region coughed up its treasures decades ago, and few locals pay much mind to stories of yet-undiscovered tombs and unplundered burial cairns. These days, only a handful of treasure seekers visit the town, and few return to the Free City with anything more valuable than a wall rubbing or an ancient tool fragment.

In the hills surrounding the town, hundreds of laborers spend weeks at a time underground, breathing recycled air pumped in via systems worth ten times their combined annual salary. The miners are the chattel of Diamond Lake, its seething, tainted blood. But they are also Diamond Lake's foundation, their weekly pay cycling back into the community via a gaggle of gambling dens, bordellos, ale halls, and temples. Because work in the mines is so demanding and dangerous, most folk come to Diamond Lake because they have nowhere else to turn, seeking an honest trade of hard labor for subsistence-level pay simply because the system has allowed them no other option. Many are foreigners displaced from native lands by war or famine. Work in a Diamond Lake mine is the last honest step before utter destitution or crimes of desperation. For some, it is the first step in the opposite direction: a careful work assignment to ease the burden on debtor-filled prisons, one last chance to make it in civil society.

Despite its squalor, Diamond Lake is crucial to the Free City's economy. The city's directors thus take a keen interest in local affairs, noting the rise and fall of the managers who run Diamond Lake's mines in trust for the government. The city's chief man in the region is **Governor-Mayor Lanod Neff** (NE male human fighter 6), a lecherous philanderer eager to solidify his power and keep the mine managers in line. Neff exerts his capricious will via the agency of the grandiloquent **Sheriff Cubbin** (NE male human fighter 5), a man so renowned for corruption that many citizens assumed the announcement of his commission was a joke until he started arresting people.

The alliance between the governor-mayor and his pocket police might not be enough to cow Diamond Lake's powerful mine managers, but Lanod Neff holds a subtle advantage thanks to the presence of his distinguished brother, the scrupulous **Allustan** (N human male wizard 8), a wizard from the Free City who retired to Diamond Lake five years ago. None dare move against Neff so long as Allustan is around.

Instead of scheming against the government, Diamond Lake's six mine managers plot endlessly against one another, desperate to claim a weakened enemy's assets while at the same time protecting their own. While they are not nobles, the mine managers exist in a strata above normal society. They consider themselves far above their employees, many of whom are indentured or effectively enslaved as part of a criminal sentence. The miners' loyalty tends to map directly to the working conditions, pay, and respect offered to the miners by their wealthy masters.

The most ambitious and manipulative mine manager in Diamond Lake is **Balabar Smenk** (CN male human rogue 7), a disquieting schemer who hopes to gain a monopoly on the town's mining patents by forcing his enemies into bankruptcy and offering to buy their claims at the last minute for coppers on the gold piece.

But Smenk's most dubious plots seem like petty crime in light of the current activities of another mine manager, **Ragnolin Dourstone** (LN male dwarf expert 6), a dwarf of formerly unimpeachable ethics who has fallen under the sway of a terrible cult called the Ebon Triad.

The Rival Adventurers

Auric (N male human fighter 5): The human gladiator Auric wears a unique red and black leather girdle topped with the representation of a haunted female face—the Champion's Belt of the Free City Arena. Auric fancies himself the leader of the trio, but he's very susceptible to Khellek's poisoned whispers and diabolical insight. Assuming he survives, Auric will later encounter the PCs when they do battle in the Free City Arena.

Khellek (NE male human wizard 5): This balding, dark-haired human wizard wears a high-collared red cape fastened with a skull clasp over a green jerkin and pants. His receding hairline reveals his advancing age, as do the white streaks at his temples. Khellek belongs to the Seekers, an untrustworthy organization of corrupt archeologists and adventurers who seek knowledge regardless of the cost. He recently heard a rumor of a new chamber discovered in an allegedly "empty" tomb elsewhere in the Cairn Hills, and has maneuvered the trio to Diamond Lake to seek out similar riches. Conventional wisdom suggests that all of the cairns were completely plundered decades ago, but Khellek has never considered himself conventional.

Tirra (N female elf rogue 5): The vivacious Tirra is in the adventuring life for the money, and is a member in good standing with the Free City's notorious Guild of Thieves. The way the PCs treat Tirra in Diamond Lake will have implications later in the Adventure Path, when the PCs visit the Free City and get a chance to meet members of that guild face-to-face.

The Triad hopes to merge the deities Vecna, Hextor, and Erythnul (or three other evil gods appropriate to your campaign) into an unthinkably powerful overgod. A chamber carved in ancient times below the town might prove to be vital to this diabolical plot, but before the great god of darkness may take form, certain preconditions must be met. Most importantly, Ebon Triad liturgy suggests that the overgod may rise only during an era of darkness, decay, and writhing doom. This is the Age of Worms, and it's starting in Diamond Lake.

Diamond Lake (small town): Conventional; AL N; Population 1,023; 800 gp limit; Assets 40,920 gp; Isolated (96% human, 2% halfling, 1% gnome, 1% other races).

Authority Figures: Governor-Mayor Lanod Neff (NE male human fighter 6); Balabar Smenk, mine manager (CN male human rogue 7); Chaum Gansworth, mine manager (N male human rogue 4); Ellival Moonmeadow, mine manager (CN male elf bard 4); Gelch Tilgast, mine manager (N male human expert 6); Luzane Parrin, mine manager (N female human rogue 3); Ragnolin Dourstone, mine manager (LN male dwarf expert 6); Sheriff Cubbin (NE male human fighter 5); Tolliver Trask, garrison commander (LN male human warrior 10).

Map Key

Diamond Lake crouches in the lowland between three hills and the lake itself, a splotch of mud, smoke, and blood smeared across uneven terrain marked by countless irregular mounds and massive rocks. The oldest buildings pack the lakeshore, where fishing vessels once docked and stored their impressive catches. That commerce has abandoned the town entirely, for the shining waters that once gave Diamond Lake its name are now so polluted as to make fishing impossible. Many old warehouses have been converted into cheap housing for miners and laborers, and no one is safe outdoors after dark. As one walks north along the streets of Diamond Lake, the buildings become sturdier and the spirits of their inhabitants likewise improve. A great earthen road called the Vein bisects the town. With few exceptions, those living north of the Vein enjoy a much better life than the wretches living below it.

All of the town's social classes congregate in the Vein's central square. Roughly every two weeks, someone in the town upsets someone else so greatly that the only recourse is a duel to the death at the center of a ring of cheering miners. The bookmakers of the Emporium and the Feral Dog do brisk business on such occasions, which tend to draw huge crowds. On less violent nights, the square is still home to a thousand pleasures and poisons; if Diamond Lake is a creature, the Vein's central square is its excitable, irregular heart.

The following short descriptions cover key locations found on the Diamond Lake poster map provided with this issue of DUNGEON. Note that several buildings do not have numbers, and can easily stand in for any locations not listed below.

The Mine Managers

Balabar Smenk (CN male human rogue 7): A corpulent elemental of corruption and bad taste, Balabar Smenk lords his political clout over everyone in Diamond Lake save the governor-mayor and garrison commander, whom he privately mocks. Smenk has wrestled four mines into his possession in the last 10 years, and has designs upon the rest. A coven of sycophants and hired goons surrounds him at all times. Rumors suggest that he has powerfully connected friends in the Free City.

Chaum Gansworth (N male human rogue 4): Diamond Lake's youngest mine manager is also its most cautious. He's sympathetic to the appeals of his paramour Luzane Parrin to join her and Gelch Tilgast in an alliance against the spreading influence of Balabar Smenk, but his inherent pragmatism suggests that even together they may not be strong enough to hold back the inevitable. Gansworth coldly views Parrin as a political tool, and would sell out the whole alliance to Smenk if he could only trust him. For now he refuses to take sides.

Ellival Moonmeadow (CN male elf bard 4): Regulars at Lazare's gaming parlor know this reclusive elf as "The Prince," since he is a minor noble from the distant elven realm of Celene, a land so fabled it might as well be imaginary as far as most of Diamond Lake's residents are concerned. Moonmeadow remains aloof from the affairs of the human mine managers, and sees their iron-based operations as more vulgar than his local silver monopoly.

Gelch Tilgast (N male human expert 6): Ten years ago, the aging Gelch Tilgast held the reins of Diamond Lake's ore trade, a position he'd enjoyed most of his life. Then Balabar Smenk and his boundless ambition came to town. In his youth, Tilgast would have relished the challenge, but he didn't move fast enough to block Smenk's ascent, which has led directly to his own decline. Tilgast currently fuels enormous energy into building an alliance against Smenk that includes Luzane Parrin and a handful of weak mine managers from the neighboring towns of Steaming Springs and Blackstone.

Luzane Parrin (N female human rogue 3): As the yield of her mines faltered in the last decade, so faltered the fortunes of Luzane Parrin, inheritor of her mother's proud legacy as one of the town's wealthiest managers. First, a humiliated Parrin discharged her house staff. Then she scornfully sold her demesne to Balabar Smenk, who had rudely courted her for years despite the fact that she was married. Two years ago, her husband died mysteriously. She now clings to a hopeful relationship with Chaum Gansworth and a political alliance with Gelch Tilgast as the last defenses against Smenk's disgusting advances.

Ragnolin Dourstone (LN male dwarf expert 6): About 50 years ago, Ragnolin Dourstone left his clan home in the halls of the dwarven stronghold of Greysmere after intentionally collapsing part of his family's mines in return for a hefty bribe from a competing human mining consortium. His greed and lust for power drove him to establish several mining operations in the area, with the most lucrative centered in Diamond Lake. As his career improved he came into contact with a cadre of strangers from out of town, evil cultists who forced Dourstone to provide them sanctuary in one of his mines in exchange for their silence about his complicity in the Greysmere disaster. Exploration of this cultist stronghold comprises the bulk of "The Three Faces of Evil," the second Age of Worms adventure.

1. The Emporium

Every week, hundreds of miners boil up from the depths, their pockets lined with freshly earned coin. The Emporium exists to separate the men from the money, and at this it is paramount among Diamond Lake's diverse businesses. Ten years ago it was simply Zalamandra's, one of a dozen vice dens along the Vein. Its ill fortunes changed the day its charismatic young madam seduced Professor Montague Marat, proprietor of a traveling sideshow and curiosity collection passing through Diamond Lake. The two soon joined forces, and a cavalcade of freaks and eccentrics moved into the building's lower floor. Thus was born Zalamandra's Emporium, and Diamond Lake has never been the same.

Upon entering, visitors encounter a small desk station manned by a grinning, businesslike attendant named **Gaspar** (N male human rogue 2). The thin, balding man smiles wryly at all times, a gesture accentuated by his upcurled moustache. The house charges three coppers for access to the "Gallery of Science" along the first floor's central corridor, and three silver for access to the lushly decorated upper floor, which features a large gaming hall, an exclusive entertainment club, and the infamous Veiled Corridor, where any pleasure may be obtained for the right price.

The private chambers of the Veiled Corridor are frequented by the community's elite, including the governor-mayor, sheriff, most of the mine managers, and several prominent merchants. **Zalamandra** (CN female human rogue 7) does not tolerate blackmailers among her staff, but nonetheless keeps a mental file of the predilections and preferences of all of her prominent customers, silently wielding this knowledge as an anvil over the heads of potential political enemies. That she has not yet been assassinated is a tribute to her considerable political skills and to the shielding influence of Professor Marat's motley assembly of living oddities.

Although the professor himself abandoned Diamond Lake three years ago, nearly a dozen of his former employees remain at the Emporium, making more money here than they ever did on the road. Foremost among these nonesuches is the affable **Shag Solomon** (N male quaggoth aristocrat 6), an aristocratic shaggy "wild man" from the northern pine forests. Solomon's vicious teeth and jagged claws contrast with his shabby gentleman's garb and cultured demeanor. When not on display, he frequents the opium lounge upstairs, where the wealthier patrons adore his clever stories.

Other attractions include the misshapen contortionist **Tom Shingle** (CN male boggle rogue 4), the combustible magician **Ariello Klint** (CN male halfling sorcerer 3), a two-headed calf named Esmerelda, Jr., and the alluring **Chezabet** (CG human female bard 4), who reads fortunes using a replica *deck of many things*.

The Emporium offers several rotating games of chance, with the most popular being dragonfire (an ante-based card game), norebonne (a polyhedral dice game), and a contest known simply as the Rat Game, in which four rats scurry to be the first through an open-topped maze. When the winner reaches the labyrinth's central chamber, an attendant injects it with a serum that immediately triggers a rabid frenzy. At this time, four doors built into the sides of the maze slide open, revealing four Tiny spear-wielding jermaline (*Monster Manual II*, 131). Patrons wager on all aspects of the ensuing melee.

Folk of all social classes flock to the Emporium throughout the day and night, so the place makes an excellent staging ground for a chance encounter with an important NPC. Because Zalamandra tolerates absolutely no conflict within her walls, even sworn enemies must treat each other respectfully in the Emporium or risk the attentions of **Kurlag** (N male half-ogre fighter 4), the establishment's imposing bouncer.

2. Lazare's House

Those seeking a relatively cultured nightspot often congregate at Lazare's House, a cozy gaming parlor situated on the Vein's central square. In contrast to the ostentatious banners and garish chipped paint on the Emporium across the street, Lazare's exudes a quiet sense of class with a stylish stone and timber construction and distinctive crooked-peaked roof. Inside, Diamond Lake's elite match wits over dragonchess, a popular game in which two sides of 42 pieces contest over three 96-square boards representing the sky, the earth, and the underworld. Pieces include the griffon, sylph, oliphant, basilisk, hero, thief, and paladin. Scholars claim that the game is a metaphor for the celestial struggles of fundamental law, chaos, good, and evil. In Diamond Lake, it's principally another justification for gambling.

A central hearth, constantly stoked to comfortable warmth by the courteous staff, serves as the hub of a roughly circular interior. Along the ring, eight alcoves offer an excellent location for private conversation or even romantic trysts. Each alcove is a half-moon of posh benches encircling a rectangular table bearing a special built-in dragonchess board. Visitors are expected to bring their own pieces, but may rent a house set for 2 gp. This fee effectively keeps out the riff-raff, making Lazare's a haven for visiting dignitaries and Diamond Lake's upper class.

A game of dragonchess takes a full hour and is played conversationally. Many casual players prefer the discussions to the game and play accordingly. Others dedicate considerable passion toward memorizing strategies and perfecting surprise traps and feints. To resolve a dragonchess game, both players make an opposed Profession (gambler) skill check. Characters with 5 or more ranks in Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate receive a cumulative +2 synergy bonus on this check for each appropriate skill. Wagers of up to 100 gp can be found on any given night, but most tend to be of the 5–10 gp variety. **Lazare** (NG male human rogue 4; Profession [gambler] +9) frowns on side bets by non-players, but not so much as to ban the practice. Some of the more avid players (including all of the mine managers and Lazare himself) politely refuse to accept the challenge of anyone who lacks their own dragonchess pieces, valued at 50 gp or more. The game attracts dilettantes and devotees, but the two groups seldom mix.

Lazare himself was a dragonchess champion in the Free City some 20 years ago, and used ample winnings gained there to purchase a mine in the hills northeast of Diamond Lake. He and his family moved to the village and a new life as mine managers, but failed to anticipate the desperate, appalling politics of the mud-soaked mining town. Within three years, Lazare was all but bankrupted, forced to sell his mine to Balabar Smenk (whom the usually serene chessmaster still hates with undisguised passion). Lazare blames Smenk for the death of his beloved wife, who grew gravely ill at the height of the ownership struggle. Lazare cherishes his daughter, **Dannath** (NG female human aristocrat 2), who reminds him of his lost love and the stakes of Diamond Lake politics.

Lazare swiftly allies himself with anyone who makes an overt move against Balabar Smenk, but he does so cautiously and without fanfare. He summons them to his parlor for a private audience, during which he attempts to gauge their abilities and reasons for moving against Smenk. If his attitude is changed from friendly to helpful during this encounter, Lazare contacts the PCs a week later and again summons them to his establishment. This time, he takes the PCs on a circuit of the gaming alcoves, where he introduces them to Gansworth and Parrin. The female mine manager stays silent during the encounter, but Gansworth challenges one of the PCs to a game of dragonchess. If the PC manages to beat him (Profession [gambler] +5), he invites the group to his restaurant, the Rusty Bucket (area **25**), to propose a formal alliance.

Another unusual patron is **Khellek** (NE male human wizard 5), leader of the trio of Free City adventurers currently exploring the empty Stirgenest Cairn outside Diamond Lake. Khellek makes a point to challenge any seemingly worthy opponent, using the game as a pretense to pump natives for information on nearby tombs. Khellek wears a simple silver ring on the third finger of his right hand. The face of this ring bears an eight-pointed star symbol, and is identical to the ring found on the finger of the ghoulish Ulavant in area **21** of "The Whispering Cairn." Both Ulavant and Khellek belong to a secret society of unscrupulous archeologists and pseudohistorians called the Seekers, and if Khellek sees a PC with the ring he assumes that PC is also a member. At the sight of the ring, Khellek arches

his eyebrows respectfully and says "Revelation comes also in darkness." When the PC does not respond with the appropriate "Thus darkness is also light," Khellek grows suspicious and changes the subject, convinced that the PCs have stolen the ring from another Seeker. He begins pestering them about how they came across the trinket. If told about the Whispering Cairn, Khellek gathers his companions Auric and Tirra and sets out to plunder its riches for himself.

3. The Feral Dog

Since both Lazare's and the Emporium charge a small fee for entry, Diamond Lake's poorest laborers must turn to a collection of run-down ale halls with more sullied reputations. The busiest by far is the Feral Dog, a sleazy tavern on the Vein's central square. Every night and especially when the workforces of several local mines let out at the same time, cheering laborers within the bar scream obscenities and wave betting vouchers over two dogs in a lethal pit fight. No one savors the tinny ale, but the place is more about camaraderie, bravado, and desperation than about expecting exemplary quality or service.

A gang of criminals indentured to the corrupt mine manager Balabar Smenk casts a broad shadow over the Feral Dog's squalid taproom. The patrons know from experience to respect the word of **Kullen** (NE male half-orc barbarian 3), the silently seething albino half-orc who leads the motley band with little tolerance for insolence and a powerful backhand. The PCs cross paths with Kullen and his subordinates in "The Whispering Cairn."

Arguments commonly erupt at the Feral Dog, especially during the dogfights, when betting often grows contentious and even violent. About once a month, a drunk miner falls or is pushed into the thrashing dogpit, with predictably tragic results. During the worst brawls, someone usually gets knifed. A festering garbage pit in the sharp crags behind the building is said to hold the corpses of as many humans as dogs.

In addition to a rotating cast of criminals and oblivious visitors from out of town, the Feral Dog draws its share of thrill-seekers and scrappers, honest folk who thrive on danger and excitement. Among them is a sleek, self-assured elf named **Tirra** (N female elf rogue 5; +7 ranged attack) who flirts confidently with handsome patrons and who dominates all takers in the bar's contentious dagger tossing contest. Tirra makes pleasant conversation with anyone who approaches her, but she takes a real interest only in men who ask to join in one of her games.

The dagger contest consists of three rounds, during which an unlimited number of contestants take turns throwing a house-provided dagger into a large wooden target on a wall 25 feet away. The target consists of two wide concentric rings around a central circle. All players agree upon a common wager (3 sp is typical, but Tirra likes to push her opponents as far as she thinks she can). In the first round, each contestant attempts to strike within the largest ring, requiring a ranged attack against AC 10. Anyone who fails to do so is eliminated. In subsequent rounds, contestants attempt to strike within the inner ring (AC 15) and the central circle (AC 20). The last contestant to resist elimination wins the pool, with play focusing on the central circle until only one player is left.

Tirra befriends any character who at least shows promise in the dagger game, and confesses that she is among the adventurers from the Free City currently exploring the Stirgenest Cairn across Diamond Lake (see "The Whispering Cairn"). If a PC so much as mentions exploration of the Whispering Cairn, Tirra subtly invites the

character next door to Lazare's House, where she introduces her associate, Khellek. This encounter could trigger a rivalry that lasts throughout the Age of Worms Adventure Path.

4. Church of St. Cuthbert

Each of the establishments along the Vein's central square trade in the exploitation of human vice or false hope, and the tower-flanked Church of St. Cuthbert is certainly no exception. Within this austere stucco structure, the poorest of Diamond Lake's poor huddle in a torch-lit sanctuary listening to the fiery sermons of **Jierian Wierus** (LN male human cleric 7), a bombastic orator whose populist rants appeal to the best virtues and values of the common man while at the same time preying upon their fears and superstitions. Wierus endlessly preaches a creed of common sense, honesty, and self-sacrifice, encouraging his faithful to give penance to St. Cuthbert by whipping themselves in repetitive acts of self-mortification. His growing cult, now some 150 strong, gives succor to the dregs of Diamond Lake society and is seen as a menace by the town's mine managers, government, and other religious figures. Many claim that the flagellants seem to follow Wierus as much as they do St. Cuthbert, and it is only because the charismatic firebrand somehow keeps his followers from breaking the law that his sect has been allowed to thrive.

Wierus spends most of his time in seclusion, writing sermons and communicating with his god during intense self-flagellation sessions. Rarely, he pays a personal visit to Jalek's Flophouse (area 9) to evangelize directly with his flock, usually attracting a dozen or more new converts to his cause each time. Because he is so frequently absent, PCs visiting the church for healing must deal with a secondary acolyte such as the scrupulous **Hameneezer** (LG male human cleric 3), a hard-working cleric who manages the day-to-day affairs of the church facility and who can nearly always be found within. After religious ceremonies, Hameneezer often soaks the congregation's congealing blood into rags, which are later sold as holy relics of the faith. Hameneezer and an assortment of 1st-level acolytes also offer healing potions and spellcasting services to the general public at standard rates. Members of the flock receive these boons for half price, so Cuthbert's faithful constantly drone on about the value of regularly attending church services.

Wierus performs three sermons a week; each fills to capacity at least an hour before the high priest arrives and is a rambunctious affair. Not all devotees whip themselves into religious fervor, but enough do that those who abstain mark themselves as outsiders. Wierus views new arrivals as thrilling challenges, and tailors his sermons to first-time visitors, urging them to join his growing congregation and reclaim Diamond Lake under the banner of community and strong values. "Dark times is coming," he says, eyes afire. "Writhing times. You best be ready when the clouds snuff out the sky."

5. Tidwoad's

Sooner or later, characters looking to sell loot discovered in the Whispering Cairn will cross paths with **Tidwoad** (LE male gnome expert 5), a cantankerous jeweler with a meticulously arranged shop located on the Vein's central square. Tidwoad's is as close to a bank as one can find in Diamond Lake, and the gnome keeps several small vaults in the crawlspace below his workshop. He maintains an illusory collection of his finest gems in a showroom display case, boasting that his establishment is completely theft proof. A shield guardian named Festus helps to keep the gnome's theft-free streak alive with powerful stone fists and a constant focus on protecting the shop.

Tidwoad hails from Grossetgrottel, a gnome warren several days to the northwest. He looks more favorably upon gnomes than upon members of other races, whom he considers oafish or overly delicate. He hosts 1d6 gnomish lodgers in the apartments above his workshop. These rooms enjoy an exterior staircase to the street level, and do not attach to the main-floor workshop.

The gnome jeweler charges a 5% exchange tax on all gems traded for coins, and will buy non-gem valuables at 30–50% their true worth, depending upon the persuasiveness of his clients. Tidwoad frequently paces upon the surface of his business counter, exclaiming that his customer's efforts to get a better deal will drive him into a debtor's prison. He reports news of any significant items to both Balabar Smenk and Chaum Gansworth, who keep the gnome on a retainer to look out for possible marks with more valuables than good sense.

6. Sheriff's Office

When a barroom brawl gets out of hand or when visitors threaten to upset the balance of power in Diamond Lake, Governor-Mayor Lanod Neff relies upon the discretion and agency of his private police force, assembled from a collection of corrupt watchmen gathered during Neff's youth as a watch captain in the Free City. Nearly all of them were drummed out of service in the capital due to some indiscretion, but each maintained a hold over municipal authorities (often in the form of potential blackmail fodder) strong enough to ensure that they were not bounced from the service entirely, but instead reassigned to Diamond Lake.

Led by a boisterous alcoholic named **Sheriff Cubbin** (NE male human fighter 5), the six thugs who comprise the constabulary see to the general safety of the town and ensure that Neff's schemes go off without a hitch. They take a keen interest in unusual visitors and in the dealings of the town's mine managers, Balabar Smenk and Gelch Tilgast in particular. The police don't care one bit about crimes committed against the mine managers' agents, but decorum insists that they persecute overt crimes committed against the managers themselves to the full extent of the law.

Should the player characters come into conflict with Sheriff Cubbin or his right-hand man, **Deputy Jamis** (NE male human fighter 3), they find the constables eminently bribable and subtly hostile. They like things the way they are in Diamond Lake, and don't appreciate anyone upsetting the balance of power unless their

actions explicitly benefit the governor-mayor. If the PCs kill a constable, they must contend with the fury of Lanod Neff, who presses Garrison Commander Tolliver Trask into helping him hunt down the criminals. Despite his misgivings about Neff and his strong dislike for Cubbin's cadre, Trask remains an agent of the Free City, and reluctantly agrees to assist the governor-mayor. Once the garrison has turned against them, the PCs find life in Diamond Lake extremely difficult.

The Sheriff's Office off the Vein's central square contains living quarters for all six constables and a twelve-cell jail filled with a motley assembly of drunks and maniacs. Picking the sturdy cell door locks requires a DC 15 Open Lock check. Two deputies (N male human fighter 2) guard the cells at all times, and can raise an alarm bell that summons two more within 1d4 minutes.

7. General Store

Running a successful business in Diamond Lake means avoiding entanglements with the constantly maneuvering mine managers and scrupulously avoiding favoritism (real or perceived). No merchant better understands this reality than **Taggin** (N male human expert 4), the amiable master of the town's largest general store. Tables line the walls within, stacked high with rope coils, lanterns, bottles, gloves, and gear. Wagon wheels rest against barrels filled with nails or candles. The inventory includes most common adventuring gear, and Taggin cheerfully offers to special order anything he does not have in stock from the Free City, a process that "usually takes about a week." He's even willing to procure especially rare items such as spell components for a 15% mark-up on the standard price. If a PC ever explains why he needs a specific item or makes any comment about adventuring or illegal activity, the handsome shopkeep holds out his hands and politely shakes his head. "Your business is your business," he says with a smile. "Wouldn't be right for me to overhear." Taggin is just shy of middle age, but dresses somewhat stylishly for his class. He has a handlebar mustache and full, receding blond hair. He treats women of any race with exceptional politeness.

8. The Hungry Gar

Guld Tortikan (NG male human expert 2), head chef at the Hungry Gar, claims to serve the finest meal on the Vein. He is mistaken.

9. Jalek's Flophouse

When the lake turned foul, Diamond Lake's modest fishing industry fled the town, leaving a wake of empty warehouses and bankrupted fishers. Some of these warehouses became stockades for mine managers, packed with raw ore and letters of credit from the Free City and beyond. Others fell to ruin and became infested with squatters and addicts. Jalek's Flophouse, situated on Front Street within smelling distance of the lake, is the town's most famous warehouse, as it houses nearly a hundred pitiful indigents fighting off destitution with a handful of copper. A rotting wooden framework within supports a lurching, mazelike second floor, where every step brings an alarming creak and the walls thrum with muffled conversation. Lodging is 5 coppers a night, paid to a massive, helmeted mute named **Golot** (NE half-orc barbarian 3). The brute pummels those who do not pay until they flee or die. No one has an address at Jalek's—the room you have is the room you can keep. Most rooms lack doors, let alone locks, but the shifting inhabitants and the chaotic layout of the

upper floor makes it one of the best places to disappear in all of Diamond Lake. The landlord **Jalek** (NE male halfling rogue 2) lives in a rooftop apartment and is seldom seen. The Cuthbertine flagellant Jieran Wierus frequently visits the flophouse, where he recruits a growing tide of converts.

10. Smenk Residence

Balabar Smenk lives in a sodden old mansion a century past its prime. Three thugs (N male human warrior 2) patrol the streets around his home, warning anyone they see to go away with a sneer and the brandishing of a lead pipe. Despite these precautions, Smenk's front door is always wide open, fulfilling an old public promise that he would always be available to his miners. No one dwells within the wide halls beyond the front door, for three great bestial apes prowl the outer corridors, chained to a rail that runs through all the rooms, within reach of nearly everywhere. The dire apes attack all visitors who do not reek of Smenk's personal cologne, an odious needlefolk extract from the distant south.

11. Deepspike Mine

When former political allies in the Free City grew uncomfortable with their relationship with Balabar Smenk, they contrived to grant him the near-worthless deed to this failing mine, necessitating that he leave the capital to personally see to his affairs. Smenk swiftly squeezed the last ore from the mine and used the profits thus generated to launch an extensive blackmail operation aimed at consolidating his power in Diamond Lake by forcing other mine managers out of business and pressing his embarrassed friends in the Free City's government to re-assign the deeds to the failing operations to him. He now uses this abandoned mine only for storage and occasionally to disappear the body of a slain enemy. It is protected by a padlock on an iron door (Open Lock DC 20).

12. Garrison

Centuries ago, long before the foundation of the Free City, a petty lord commanded the shores of the lake and the nearby iron ore and silver mines from a sturdy hilltop keep. Today, the refurbished ruin of that keep serves as home to more than 60 members of the Free City Militia, soldiers tasked with patrolling the northern hills, keeping watch over the lizardfolk-infested Mistmarsh to the south, and liaising with halfling, gnome, and dwarf communities in the region.

A third of the soldiers are always out on patrol, a wide circuit of nearby roadways and wildlands that takes them away from Diamond Lake for a week at a time. Remaining soldiers drill, maintain the garrison, hunt, and familiarize themselves with local terrain.

The bored soldiers present rich mining ground for a cadre of clerics and paladins of Heironeous, who provide spiritual and magical aid to the warriors from a stately chapel within the garrison fortress.

Captain Tolliver Trask (LN male human warrior 10), the garrison's aging commander, distinguished himself in a recent war and has the respect of his charges and of the community at large. He cares little about the day-to-day politics of Diamond Lake, and encourages his men to stay out of local business. He sees his job as critical to the defense of the Free City. Diamond Lake is just something that happens to be near his important work.

He supports Governor-Mayor Lanod Neff out of respect for the political process that put him in power, if not for the man himself. He trusts three advisors more closely than any of his other associates. The Heironean chief cleric Valkus Dun (see below) acts as Trask's spiritual advisor and foil. Trask's best friend is **Dietrik Cicaeda** (NG male human expert 4), the middle-aged Chief Cartographer of Diamond Lake. Cicaeda is the region's sole legal authority regarding issues of land ownership, making his journals and maps among the town's most valuable treasures. He and his work thus enjoy the official protection of the garrison's walls and soldiery, and remain safely locked away from the town's manipulative mine managers. Chief Scout **Merris Sandovar** (NG male human ranger 3), lately of the Bronzewood Lodge druidic community three hours northeast of Diamond Lake, rounds out Captain Trask's inner circle.

The complete garrison force consists of 60 soldiers (24 1st-level warriors, 24 2nd-level warriors, and 12 3rd-level warriors). Militia members typically wear leather or chainmail armor and carry a longsword or shortbow. This force is divided into thirds, with each squad led by a lieutenant. These individuals have the ear of Captain Trask and the admiration of their charges. They are **Dobrun Trent** (LN male half-elf fighter 6), **Mikkela Venderin** (N female human fighter 5), and **Trovost Skunt** (LN male human fighter 5), who exploits his authority with regularity and aplomb.

The Chapel of Heironeous

Most of the guards and soldiers serving in the Diamond Lake garrison honor Heironeous as the patron of justice and martial prowess. The Invincible One's temple is little more than a large high-ceilinged chamber within the garrison itself, but it boasts the second largest congregation in Diamond Lake, as well as one of the village's most dynamic personalities in the form of its high priest, Valkus Dun.

Dun came to Diamond Lake two years ago, after the previous high priest vanished under mysterious circumstances. Local gossip holds that Dun once had great prospects in the Free Ciy's immense Sanctum of Heironeous, but that politics saw him exiled to an assignment in squalid Diamond Lake. Nevertheless, Dun took to his assignment with zeal, and the weekly services have taken on an activist spirit. While the garrison commander urges his charges to stay out of local affairs, Dun instills in them a duty to the villagers and urges them to make a difference in the community. The resulting tension, between the garrison commander and Valkus Dun as well as between the Heironean soldiers and the disreputable elements of Diamond Lake (which is to say nearly all of them), is palpable.

A massive wall fresco of a mythic battle between perfect Heironeous and his traitorous half-brother Hextor looms over the chapel's bronzewood altar. The holy image is lit by dozens of guttering

torches at night and by several stained-glass windows during the day. Weekly services exhibit a great deal of fraternity and sober, harmonic hymns. They are open to the public (presenting one of the rare chances for non-military folk to sneak inside the garrison), but are dominated by soldiers and guards.

Valkus Dun (LG male human fighter 3/cleric 7) is a tall, handsome man with dark brown hair and long sideburns. His strong brow gives him a serious look at all times. He's almost never seen without his full plate armor and twin swords—one a mighty bastard sword (his favorite) and the other a longsword rumored to bear a potent magical enchantment. Despite his generally serious nature, Dun is quite friendly and likable. He and Jieran Wierus, the Cuthbertine prophet, share several opinions about improving the city but can't stand each other's company.

Velias Childramun (LG male human cleric 4), an aging priest who has lived his whole life at Diamond Lake's garrison, handles most of the healing needs of the complex and sees to the occasional pilgrim seeking the soothing balm of Heironeous. Childramun makes an effective father figure for PC clerics of Heironeous or paladins, and will heal such characters for free provided he has the spells available to do so. Friends are, of course, expected to make a donation to the chapel in exchange for healing services.

Mélinde (LG female human paladin 3) is a charming young warrior priestess who hopes one day to run the Diamond Lake chapel. She is in no hurry to assume the mantle of responsibility, however, and for now is content to act as Valkus Dun's closest personal advisor. She spends most of her time training with the soldiers in the garrison's courtyard, and has a reputation as an excellent swordmistress. Mélinde excels at the game of dragonchess, and whiles away her free time at Lazare's House, where she takes on all challengers. She craves excitement, and might offer her services to a party of adventurers looking for another sword arm or some extra healing. The red-headed woman wears white and blue robes over a slim suit of chainmail.

13. Lakeside Stables

While the common folk of Diamond Lake have plenty of reason to despair of their living conditions, they remain several times more fortunate than the community's horses, who predominantly dwell in the run-down Lakeside Stables under the careful watch of the brutal **Lanch Faraday** (NE male half-elf ranger 2), a portly ostler prone to distressing mood swings. Customers commonly complain of mysterious bruises on their horses, evidence of Faraday's uncontrollable rages. Still, the price is right, and the walls around back keep the horses relatively safe from theft, so no one has yet pressed the issue. Faraday bribes Sheriff Cubbin generously to keep the law off his back. Stabling fees are 5 sp per day.

14. The Midnight Salute

This by-the-numbers house of ill repute caters to the garrison crowd and anyone seeking a less exotic (and less expensive) experience than that offered by the Emporium's legendary Veiled Corridor. Its proprietress, the ravishing **Purple Prose** (NE female elf rogue 3), stresses discretion and decorum with her workforce, but is unaware that one of her best earners, **Constance Grace** (CN female human rogue 1) is an agent in the pay of Governor-Mayor Lanod Neff, who gathers salacious stories about local soldiers, visiting dignitaries, and even three of the powerful mine managers for potential blackmail fodder. Neff foolishly allowed word of these dossiers to surface in an attempt to cow his political enemies, but instead the move is in the process of backfiring. The lovely Constance is unlikely to survive the month, and nearly all of the mine managers have considered a plan to break into Neff's estate and make off with the evidence. These plans uniformly involve contracting a gang of dispensable agents, giving the player characters plenty of opportunity to get involved in the action.

15. The Spinning Giant

When not drilling, sleeping, or on patrol, garrison soldiers flock to this raucous two-story tavern to meet with friends, chant drinking songs, and drown themselves in ale and good cheer. A blue-shingled roof tops filthy white plaster walls. A faded fresco painted on the building's face depicts a dancing imbecilic hill giant in a yellow dress. Patrons must enter and exit via a door positioned between the giant's legs. This is Flailing Felanore, a dim-witted young giantess captured by the garrison militia 40 years ago and "granted" to the proprietor of a favorite watering hole to serve as mascot. The attraction worked, drawing visitors from as far as the Free City to gawk and stare at Felanore's awkward gyrations. Though Felanore died from an outbreak of the Red Death plague nearly 20 years ago, the free-standing circular center stage on which she once pranced remains the most prestigious musical venue in town, if not nearly the most titillating.

Garrison soldiers make up most of the Spinning Giant's regular patrons, with a handful of mine overseers and merchants rounding out the crowd. Most who come here consider themselves honorable, and expect similar conduct from others. They do not tolerate pickpockets, and respond harshly when confronted with a crime in progress. They hold a similar disdain for Diamond Lake's constabulary, and have made it known on many occasions that Sheriff Cubbin and his boys are not welcome on the premises. Nor do they welcome Diamond Lake's poor, including most miners. Regular patrons routinely "suggest" that riffraff instead visit one of Diamond Lake's other fine establishments. Soldiers act with bravado in these encounters, knowing that most of the Spinning Giant's other customers will have their backs should a fight break out.

16. The Captain's Blade

Tyrol Ebberly (N male human fighter 4), a severe-looking man who claims to have once been a watch captain in the Free City, runs this small shop with efficiency. He's an absolute fanatic about weapons, always showing off his masterwork items with enthusiasm. He's also an inveterate gossip, and is likely to mention the PCs' exploits to others in town. He asks endless questions about their affairs, trying to learn more about how they were wounded and why they're looking for

money. If they show off any odd artifacts, he becomes even more excited.

Ebberly has any melee weapon up to 900 gp in stock, but must send away for more expensive items, a process that takes 1d3+6 days. He specializes in masterwork melee weapons, and keeps his surprisingly wide selection displayed on the walls. He does not offer any masterwork ranged weapons, and sends anyone looking for them to Venelle's, across town. "Don't forget your coin purse," he sniffs indignantly. "You're sure to need it there."

Ebberly keeps three silk-wrapped special items hidden under the front counter, eagerly showing them off to any cash-laden customer.

Vondoch's Claw (550 gp): A curved masterwork dagger with a 200-gp red ruby inset into the bottom of the handle. Ebberly claims that the dagger was infused with the blood of a nalfeshnee demon at the time of its forging. The handle is lined with black velvet and the blade has a yellow tinge to it. It's nothing more than a masterwork dagger.

Ancient Spearhead (1,000 gp): This long, iron spearpoint is attached to a wooden haft that has broken two inches below the bottom of the tip. The whole thing is about 8 inches long. It doesn't look like much, but it cuts the finger of anyone who touches it. Ebberly handles it very carefully. It's actually a *+1 long-spear* head that must be attached to a new haft by someone with the Craft Magical Arms and Armor feat to be used as an effective weapon.

Adventurer's Wand (525 gp): Tyrol claims that this wand came from a desperate adventurer who couldn't pay off his debts a few years back. He never got everything he was owed, because the adventurer skipped town—but not before giving Tyrol a deep red wand with a darkened, ashy tip. His Bluff check (+2 bonus) helps him conceal that there is more to this story than he lets on, but he will not speak further on the matter. The wand is a *wand of burning hands* with 35 charges remaining (caster level 3rd).

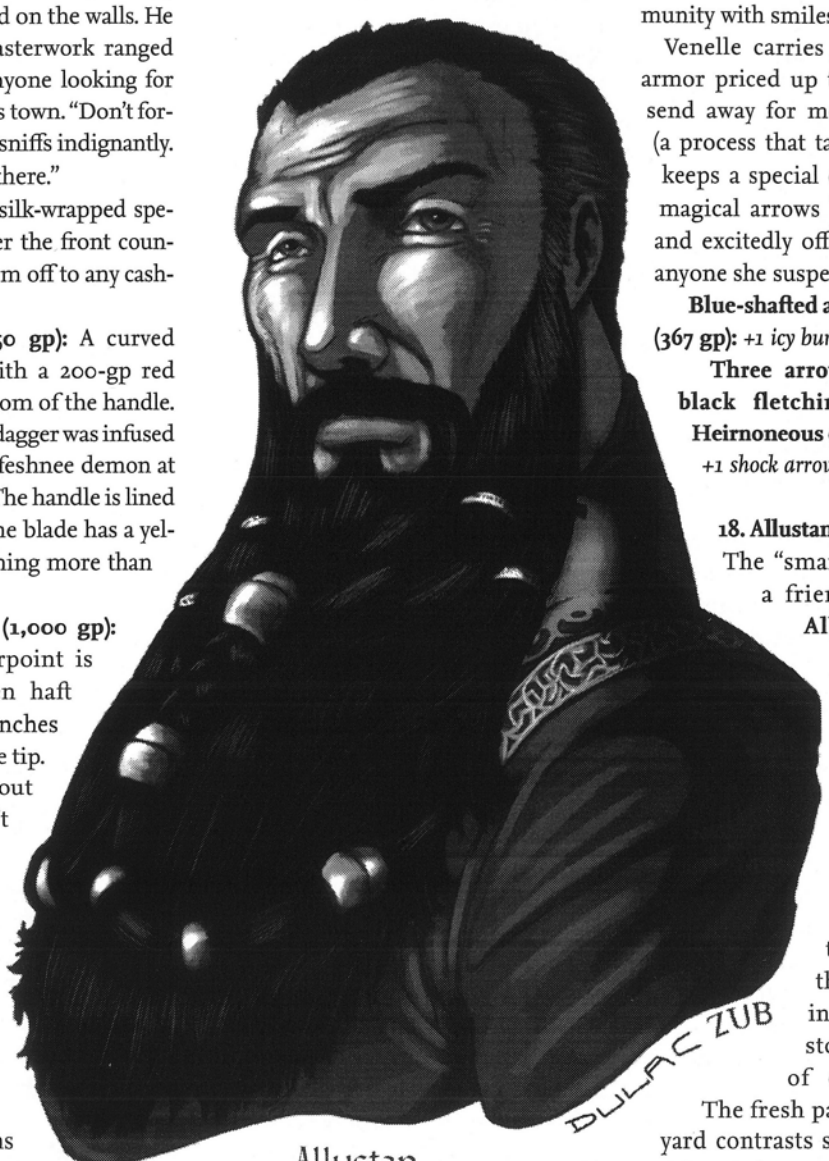
17. Venelle's

A redolence of fresh pine suffuses this handsome establishment, a distinctive structure that incorporates intricate carved patterns and upright logs. The proprietor, a curious woman named **Venelle** (NG female human ranger 3), makes masterwork bows and arrows, and also deals in other weapons and armor imported from the Free City in exchange for items of her own design. The shop is a bit chaotic, with various items piled on tables. Armor sits loosely on too-small dummies. Venelle has a touch of elven blood about her, and is pleased to entertain guests who appreciate arrowcraft and elven culture. She has friends among the Bronzewood Lodge (detailed in DUNGEON #125), and greets other characters from that nearby community with smiles and a 10% discount.

Venelle carries most weapons and armor priced up to 900 gp, but must send away for more expensive items (a process that takes 1d3+8 days). She keeps a special case containing four magical arrows behind her counter, and excitedly offers to show them to anyone she suspects can afford them.

Blue-shafted arrow with sleek point (367 gp): *+1 icy burst arrow.*

Three arrows with yellow and black fletching and symbol of Heirnoneous on point (167 gp each): *+1 shock arrow.*



Allustan

18. Allustan's Residence

The "smartest man in town," a friendly wizard named **Allustan** (N human male wizard 8), dwells within a charming red and deep blue house on one of the rare stretches of healthy grass in all of Diamond Lake. A small meditation garden abuts the face of the house, incorporating vertical stones and small pools of concentric circles. The fresh paint and well-tended yard contrasts sharply with the rest of the seedy town, a testament to the locals' respect for (or fear of) a man whose prowess is known as far as the Free City.

Allustan grew up in Diamond Lake with his brother, Lanod Neff. The sons of the town's powerful and efficient governor-mayor, they abused their influence and shamed the mine managers with social indiscretions. When finally they went too far, their father sent them both to the Free City, urging Allustan to

seek an education and placing Lanod in a plum assignment with the city watch. Allustan soon found himself in the prestigious University of Magical Arts, where his apt scholarship and bravado caught the attention of a powerful master wizard named Manzorian, a dynamic figure who traveled with some of the most renowned heroes of the day.

Manzorian offered to take on Allustan as his apprentice, assuring him a life of thrills and discovery. What Allustan got was a window into a world of manipulative chessmasters willing to backstab trusted friends to honor abstract principles of balance and neutrality. Though he thrived in the company of Manzorian and his ilk, the politics proved too much to handle, and he split with the group more than a decade ago after a bitter ethical dispute. He retired to Diamond Lake only to find his inept brother in charge and facing challenges from all sides. So he remains, knowing that his presence supports a corrupt leader but unwilling to leave his family to the wolves. The same political disinterest that got him into trouble with Manzorian keeps him from seeing the worst of his brother's offenses.

Allustan offers his library and considerable intelligence to the citizens of Diamond Lake as a sage, although few miners have reason to seek his services. Allustan charges a standard rate of 20 gp per question. He does this more to sate his curiosity than for the money; gains from his adventuring days easily cover his modest lifestyle.

The old tombs in the hills fascinate Allustan, and were a primary factor in his decision to relocate to his childhood home. He hopes to make a long-term study of the cairns, and plans eventually to publish his findings in a small encyclopedia. Any questions the PCs bring to him about the Whispering Cairn immediately pique his interest, and adventurers who bring regular news of plundered tombs and traps avoided find him more and more welcoming with each visit.

After a few days of consulting his books, Allustan immediately identifies any ancient items or glyphs from the Whispering Cairn as artifacts of the Wind Dukes of Aaqa, a powerful pre-historic race of elemental beings who are said to have once dominated an empire that spanned worlds. Eventually, these paragons of law clashed against the Queen of Chaos, a primordial being of the early Abyss. In the great final battle on the fabled fields of Pesh (thought to be far to the north), seven of the most powerful Wind Dukes employed a weapon called the *Rod of Law*, that shattered even as it struck down Miska the Wolf-Spider, the Queen's demonic consort. The *Rod of Law* became the *Rod of Seven Parts*, one of the most legendary artifacts in all of folklore.

With a few days of study, Allustan can identify each of the glyphs found in the Whispering Cairn and can explain the significance of key frescoes within the tomb. As he learns more of this growing mystery, Allustan becomes more and more helpful, eventually assisting the PCs at no charge simply to learn more about the cairn. The Wind Dukes, he claims, were the oldest civilization to build tombs in the Cairn Hills. All of the other cultures have simply emulated their practice. The wealth in an unplundered Wind Duke cairn, he says with a subtle flicker of greed in his eyes, might be beyond calculation.

When the PCs first encounter Allustan, the wizard prefers to deal with them while walking around his grounds. A large tree stump in the front yard serves well as an impromptu table where Allustan frequently deals with patrons. After he has gotten to know the party he becomes somewhat less guarded in his approach, and invites them inside to his study. Hundreds of books stuff shelves built into each wall. A dragonchess board sits frozen in mid-game on a mahogany table, exactly as it was when Allustan's falling out with Manzorian ended their ongoing long-distance contest. Should a PC challenge him, Allustan presents his own set of intricately carved pieces. "Dragonchess," he explains, "is a metaphor for life and the forces that squabble for control of the world. Before you can win, you must know that you are playing the game at all."

19. Tilgast Residence

The grandeur of Gelch Tilgast's stylish estate far outstrips its owner's current influence, which has been in free fall since Balabar Smenk first infected Diamond Lake. Tilgast maintains a family of seven fine thoroughbred horses within a well-managed stable enclosed in a stockade wall. Wealthy visitors and a few residents of the town pay 1 gp per day to stable a favorite horse within the compound, where a clutch of meticulous grooms tends to the animal's every need. One resident of the stables is Usare, a fine white stallion owned by the mine manager Luzane Parrin, whose mother was once Tilgast's greatest rival. Now the pair hatch plans in secret to protect themselves from Balabar Smenk.

The tendrils of this conspiracy reach as far as the neighboring towns of Steaming Springs and Blackstone, where allied mine managers work to thwart Smenk's shipping and supply lines using thugs disguised as simple bandits. Yet at home Tilgast has failed to attract the support of Ellival Moonmeadow, Ragnolin Dourstone, or Chaum Gansworth, all of whom remember a time when Tilgast was king of the hill and lorded his power over everyone else. Parrin remains his only shield against Smenk, and he will sacrifice her if need be. He'll do anything to preserve his power as long as he possibly can, even if that time can be measured in minutes.

20. Old Piers

In decades past, nobles from the Free City flocked to Diamond Lake to sail upon its crystal clear waters. Mine tailings, waste runoff, and other pollution ended the practice almost a century ago, but the rotting carcasses of once elaborate piers still jut into the lake's murky waters. A few masts peak out from the surface, tombstones of abandoned fishing vessels from more recent times. Regular fish cannot survive in the tainted waters, leaving only dangerous, hardy predators like the ravenous, toothy gar that have become such a problem in recent years. Those who venture across Diamond Lake do so at their own risk.

For a piece of silver, a retired marine named **Durskin** (N male human commoner 1) will ferry up to six passengers across the lake in his sloop, a

dingy vessel called the *Autumn Runner*. The destitute boatman lives on the deck of his boat, which smells of urine and teems with fleas and sea mites. Those seeking a safer passage must rely upon the *Harkness*, a ten-man sailboat maintained by the shadowy Cult of the Green Lady, who use the vessel to cross back and forth between Diamond Lake and the cairn in which their order holds its services to Wee Jas, goddess of magic and death. Passage on the *Harkness* costs 3 sp, and passengers must endure bothersome sermons on the exquisite beauty of death and the arcane prowess of the Dark-Eyed Lady. In either case, it takes about 30 minutes to cross from one shore of the lake to the other.

21. Able Carter Coaching Inn

The Able Carter Coaching Company connects the Free City to its satellite towns via a fleet of horse-drawn coaches and an inn positioned at every leg of the journey. Diamond Lake's hostelry offers 20 rooms for let at a rate of 1 gp per day. Stable services are available for a fee of 5 sp per day. Four guards (NG male human warrior 1) keep watch on the place throughout the day and night, and can be hired to ride with a coach for an additional 5 gp per day. The following chart shows travel time from Diamond Lake to other locations important in the Age of Worms Adventure Path. Journeys listed as "wild" involve at least one night in the wilderness, when the coach is a sitting duck for the numerous bandits who infest the hills and vex the garrison's militia.

Destination	Days	Direction	Wild?
Blackstone	1	East	No
Blackwall Keep	2	East, South	Yes
Elmshire	2	North	Yes
Free City	3	East	No

Characters who begin the campaign as non-natives to Diamond Lake should start play as a lodger here, having recently arrived in town. Other notable guests include **Rontabont Mur** (CG male human rogue 4), a copper miner from nearby Blackstone who has come to town at the invitation of Gelch Tilgast, who hopes to embroil him in his political alliance. Mur's boorish self-interest and whining, critical manner screams for attention at the inn's unremarkable on-site tavern, where Mur might come into petty conflict with a PC lodger. A permanent guest named **Fester Trollump** (N male human ranger 2) traps badgers in the hills and sells their pelts for a modest profit on monthly trips to the Free City. On rare occasion he traps more exciting beasts like griffons or manticores, which he personally takes to the Free City for sale to his wealthy patron, a menagerie-owning noble named Henway. Trollump is the only NPC in town willing to make a fair offer for the baby owlbear rescued from the Land farmstead in "The Whispering Cairn," but the PCs must look for him (Gather Information DC 15), as he likes to keep a low profile. A rambunctious band of seven halfling tourists from Elmshire—the Curlyfoot party—currently dominates one wing of the inn. The vacationing merchants constantly chatter about incredible freaks of nature and acts of skill witnessed at the Emporium, or the succulent steaks at the Hungry Gar, or anything else that makes them stand out as easy marks for Diamond Lake's vigilant opportunists, con men, and thieves.

22. Parrin Residence

Luzane Parrin inherited her family's claim on three mines outside Diamond Lake when her mother, the influential Millicent Parrin, died nineteen years ago from a sickness called the Red Death. Only 17 at the time, Luzane grew up fast, adapting to Diamond Lake politics with comfort. Her inexperience got the better of her once Balabar Smenk arrived in town, however, and she's been scrambling to protect her assets and holdings ever since. Over the last few years, she has watched as her closest friends, allies forged during her mother's time, fell into bankruptcy or were killed thanks to the machinations of Balabar Smenk, who at the same time continued to press her on the romantic front. Her allies removed, Smenk began nibbling at the exposed belly of Parrin's mining operations, stealing away a mine and several of her best-earning foremen and overseers. In desperation, Parrin has initiated an alliance with Gelch Tilgast and a romance with Chaum Gansworth, hoping either or both will protect her holdings and her honor (which is questionable at any rate).

Parrin once lived in the home now occupied by Balabar Smenk (area 10), but was forced to relocate to this shabby manor about three years ago. She employs an old friend of her mother's, an aging witch called **Amelliante** (N female human sorcerer 3), to keep watch on the house with a *wand of magic missile* at the ready. Her paranoia has deeply influenced her staff, which sees a dagger in every shadow.

23. Greysmere Covenant

Three prominent representatives of the dwarven stronghold of Greysmere, many days to the south across the treacherous Mistmarsh, live in this sturdy brick and timber structure. Greysmere imports some of the raw iron ore unearthed by local humans, as it bears a color prized by the most skilled artisans and metalworkers of the dwarven clans. **Dulok Blitzhame** (LN male dwarf expert 5) leads the delegation with straight talk and cunning pragmatism. Governor-Mayor Lanod Neff frequently invites the dwarves for meals and parlor discussions, and Blitzhame in particular shares a strong friendship with Ragnolin Dourstone (though he knows nothing of his affliction), from whom he gets most of the ore exported to Greysmere. The other councilors, **Galuth Grobadore** (LG male dwarf expert 3) and **Bitris Ruthek** (LN female dwarf expert 4) spend much of their time representing the interests of Greysmere in neighboring communities. The councilors' busy work requires a cadre of assistants and underlings, providing a perfect reason for a dwarf player character to be in Diamond Lake.

24. Gansworth Residence

In the 14 years since he came to Diamond Lake, Chaum Gansworth has remained in the background, never drawing too much attention to himself while quietly amassing a fortune from three very

productive mines. The first four years were the hardest, for Gelch Tilgast, then the most prominent mine manager in the town, did everything he could to thwart Gansworth's business. The doddering old pillar of the community now needs Gansworth to join his anti-Smenk alliance, but the younger mine manager remembers his early years in Diamond Lake all too bitterly to forgive and forget. He honestly doesn't know which side will win in the struggle between Tilgast and Smenk, but his current thinking is to betray his lover Luzane Parrin to Smenk, thus destroying Tilgast's strongest local ally, weakening him enough for Smenk to finish him off. But the plan changes every day, as do the enemies and allies.

Gansworth lives in the heart of Diamond Lake, at the end of a cul-de-sac marked by a memorial obelisk dedicated to the memory of a mine collapse 70 years ago that killed more than 300 miners. A low wall surrounds most of the two-story structure, and five loyal sentinels (N male human warrior 2) guard the compound at all times. Luzane Parrin spends about three nights of every week here.

25. The Rusty Bucket

This popular restaurant used to specialize in fish, but since the lake went bad it's been forced to adapt to a land-based menu. Within, green stained-glass windows filter eerie light into the main dining room, where the intertwining melodies of a trio of pipers enhances an ethereal atmosphere. Guests dine in a large common room, with a handful of nicer tables situated in a roped-off area beside the main dining hall. The far table, on a raised platform overlooking the private room, is reserved for Chaum Gansworth, Diamond Lake's most calculating mine manager and the owner of the Rusty Bucket. Gansworth rigorously pursues a neutral stance in all political dealings, afraid to expose himself to an enemy's treachery by making an overt move against one of the other mine managers. As a result, all of the town's major political players consider the Rusty Bucket neutral ground.

About the time the player characters achieve fourth level, they receive a summons from Chaum Gansworth to meet him at the Rusty Bucket. The mine manager confesses to having monitored their progress, and gauges their interest in forging an alliance. After hearing tales about the PCs, Gansworth has decided that they might present the edge he needs. Once a friendly relationship has been established, Gansworth does everything he can to encourage illegal acts against the other mine managers, especially Balabar Smenk. As time goes on, Gansworth attempts to use the PCs as hired muscle, even concocting imaginary reasons to set up raids on a rival's manor or mining operations. Gansworth works with the PCs to plan these attacks in a secret library accessible through the kitchen. He pays well for each job and always has something new for the PCs to do. If things slow down and the players get stuck in a rut, spice up the campaign with a mini-mission of your own design orchestrated by Chaum Gansworth and planned over dinner at the Rusty Bucket.

26. Moonmeadow Residence

Unlike the other mine managers of Diamond Lake, Ellival Moonmeadow manages only one mine for the directors of the Free City. He has no aspirations beyond his current holdings, and seems oblivious to the machinations of his rivals, which he has survived for more than a century. Moonmeadow owes his longevity to a keen intelligence and a reclusiveness that offers few chances to become embroiled in local affairs. The only thing that brings him into the public eye is dragonchess, and even then he plays only with opponents capable of challenging his instinctive, complex style. The blond, well-dressed elf rarely consorts with humans at all, preferring the company of six gray elves (NG male and female elf fighter 3) who also hail from his homeland, the distant realm of Celene. These agents serve as Moonmeadow's confidants and protectors, constantly on the watch for trouble even when relaxing, always within arm's reach of a weapon. Decades younger than their master, these elves mix more readily with the folk of Diamond Lake, occasionally visiting the Emporium's opium parlor, Lazare's House, or Venelle's. Conversation with them leaves one with the impression that they think they're here on a temporary assignment; that Moonmeadow's silver mining operation is merely a pretense for his presence in the region. If that's true, it's a ruse that's been going on for more than a century, for the elf has lived in Diamond Lake longer than any current resident.

Moonmeadow's sprawling manor surrounds a central courtyard containing a meditation garden, an ostentation of peacocks, and two green-and-brown-pelted cooshees named Kanemar ("Honorable Eagle") and Tatae ("Beloved Fox"), mated elven dogs who have accompanied their master since his days in Celene. A private covered dock leads to a slim boat capable of crossing the lake in 20 minutes. Swan motifs decorate the swift vessel. An elven player character might begin play as an assistant to one of Moonmeadow's lieutenants, an out-of-the-loop young elf charged with the inglorious duty of maintaining the swanboat and keeping it scrubbed of the lake's odious pollution.

27. Osgood Smithy

The distinctive "O" maker's mark of **Manlin Osgood** (N male human expert 5) is a regional sign of quality powerful enough that lesser blacksmiths in neighboring communities often forge it to maintain competitive parity. Osgood and his team of seven apprentices and journeyman smiths specialize in masterwork armor and household items like canteens, canisters, tools, and the like. Osgood is a somewhat coarse, unfailingly polite middle-aged human with a bald head and a walrus-like mustache. He always remembers a customer's name, and greets frequent patrons with a hearty handshake and a slap on the back.

28. Smelting House

A century ago, local mine managers maintained their own smelting houses, but constant conflict resulted in frequent sabotage that choked the flow of resources from Diamond Lake to Free City markets. The city directors reluctantly stepped in, monopolizing the smelting trade and basing the town's only smelting house in a massive fortress-workshop perched on the edge of the lake. Runoff slag belched from

great sub-surface pipes accounts for the majority of the pollution that has killed off most aquatic life in the region, and production these days is more robust than it has ever been. Five massive furnaces and great chemical vats crowd the building's interior, criss-crossed with shallow channels containing molten iron. Noxious fumes and scalding heat require special suits that filter the air and protect exposed skin. The rarely seen chief smelter, **Vulgan Durtch** (N male human expert 4/warrior 2), is one of the richest men in Diamond Lake, but few neighbors know anything about him. Durtch runs the place with a precision that requires his near-constant supervision over a team of two dozen menials and overseers, but rumors suggest more sinister motives for his seclusion.

A tower on the building's northwest corner serves as the residence and workshop of **Benazel the Alchemist** (NG male half-elf expert 6/wizard 3), a talkative chemist from the Free City who oversees the alchemical rituals and reagents necessary for the smelting process and who makes a minor fortune selling potions from his first-floor office. An upstairs door in Benazel's tower leads directly into the smelting house itself, and represents the most vulnerable point of entrance into the otherwise unassailable fortress.

29. Diamond Lake Boneyard
The town's overcrowded cemetery used to be a great source of bodies for medical students in the Free City and unscrupulous necromancers, but the Cult of the Green Lady has put a stop to that. Throughout the day, 1d4 green-robed acolytes wander the cemetery chanting songs holy to Wee Jas while tending graves and clearing vines and mud from stone markers dating back hundreds of years. Governor-Mayor Lanod Neff finds the cultists distasteful, but appreciates their vigilance. With the fanatics watching the boneyard, his boys at the sheriff's department can focus on more important things. Tales abound that one coffin in the boneyard—no one is sure just which one—contains not a dead body, but dozens and dozens of gold bars. Ample evidence supports the rumor, but anyone who tries to test out the theory must first deal with the cultists.

30. Neff Manor
Governor-Mayor Lanod Neff's sprawling manor house squats atop the hill overlooking Diamond Lake, a tangle of scaffolding, wires, and workcrews. Protected by a wooden stockade wall, the manor houses the political apparatus of the town, including several meeting rooms, a courthouse, and numerous bedchambers for visiting dignitaries and (just as frequently) Lanod Neff's countless cronies and concubines. Several chambers within the compound are completely empty—Neff continues his endless construction projects merely to ensure that the size and grandeur of his home outpaces that of the mine managers, whose power and influence he jealously covets.

Visitation with the governor-mayor is by appointment only, with an audience sometimes taking 3d6 days to arrange. If the PCs cannot convince a minor functionary that their plea is important (requiring a DC 15 Diplomacy check), the request is simply never filed, and the orderlies politely tell the PCs to "keep checking back" without any intention of helping them in the least. Neff is Allustan's brother, so if the PCs can show that the wizard vouches for them (such as by presenting a letter to that effect or if they are in his company), a meeting can usually be arranged on the day.

Neff himself has little time for strangers, and listens to the PCs' appeals impatiently. He conflates the good of the people with the good of Lanod Neff with alarming certainty, to the point at which something that does not threaten him directly does not, in his view, threaten the community and is hence unworthy of swift action. He favors delaying tactics and excessive information gathering to direct action. Appeals to his vanity or sense of self-preservation have the best chance of success.

31. Dourstone Mine
This iron ore mine has kept strong for centuries, predating the formal establishment of Diamond Lake as a vassal of the Free City. Ragnolin Dourstone has managed the mine since the very beginning, when he chose this spot seemingly at random. But it was the influence of an enigmatic being known as **The Faceless One** (NE male human wizard 6) that guided his hand, for Dourstone Mine stands above an ancient subterranean cathedral containing a magical pool of potent malevolence. The Faceless One and his cohorts in a cult called the Ebon Triad have dark designs upon this chamber that could spark the Age of Worms. "The Three Faces of Evil," the second installment of the Adventure Path, pits your PCs against this apocalyptic cult.

32. Abandoned Mine
It's been so long since this mine was in operation that nobody even remembers its name.

33. Menhirs
This worn old stone ring is often visited by residents of the Bronzewood Lodge, and is sacred to druids and rangers, a relic from a time when the laws of the wilderness governed man as well as animals.

34. Old Obervatory
This crumbling abandoned observatory once housed an order of monks obsessed with the heavenly bodies of the nighttime sky. Now it houses a constantly rotating group of unusual tenants with ties to Balabar Smenk. The latest such tenant is a vile Free City necromancer named **Filge** (CE male human wizard 3), who came to town to help Balabar Smenk understand secret events unfolding below the Dourstone Mine (area 31). This location is described in detail in "The Whispering Cairn."

35. Dourstone Residence
This squat, well-protected manor is the home of Ragnolin Dourstone, who appears to be one of Diamond Lake's more responsible mine managers but in fact jerks to the strings of the Ebon Triad. His manor holds no evidence of the evil being committed in his mine, and any open confrontation against him risks drawing the ire of the governor-mayor, Gelch Tilgast, and Chaum Gansworth at the least. Even if presented with evidence of Dourstone's collusion with the cult, these community pillars insist that the

dwarf must be under some sort of compulsion (which he is).

Getting the Players Involved

Working with your players before the campaign begins is the best way to ensure a healthy and long-lasting game. Before the first session, ask the players what sort of characters they would like to play. Stay general, but try to get a sense of each player's preferred race and class, and use those details as the basis for weaving the characters into Diamond Lake and hence into the Age of Worms Adventure Path. The following suggestions ought to get you started, but don't be afraid to go in a completely different direction. The best choice is the one that makes both you and your player happy.

Dwarf: No dwarves call Diamond Lake home, though a few live there. Most have some sort of business with the Greysmere Covenant (area **23**), perhaps as a guard, negotiator, or even magical advisor.

Elf: Right-thinking elves loathe Diamond Lake, as it represents everything elves find churlish and cruel about humans. Only Ellival Moonmeadow (area **26**) and his deputies—exclusively elven—seem to have the stomach for the place. A PC elf might serve as a guard or confidant of one of these deputies, or might be a deputy himself!

Gnome: Gnomes might be lodgers at Tidwoad's (area **5**) or agents of any of the mine managers. Those with a theatrical flair might find steady work with the Emporium (area **1**). Most come from the nearby warren of Grossetgrottel.

Halfling: Many halflings in Diamond Lake work in the hospitality field, as a clerk, cook, or menial of some sort. Others are (relatively) wealthy visitors from the halfling community of Elmshire to the north.

Half-Elf: Half-elves might belong to the Bronzewood Lodge community (detailed in *Dungeon* #125), or might live among the "civilized" poor of Jalek's Flophouse (area **9**). They might find themselves in the employ of Ellival Moonmeadow, but soon become aware that the mine manager simply doesn't like anyone other than elves, and half-elves don't *quite* qualify.

Half-Orc: Half-orcs' increased Strength and low Intelligence makes them ideal miners or thugs, and Diamond Lake is filled to bursting with both. A more original approach might cast a half-orc as a roustabout or performer at the Emporium. The garrison does not employ half-orcs as a rule, and most soldiers despise them thanks to an ongoing war against an orc nation far to the southwest.

Human: Humans can fill any role in Diamond Lake, from the humble miner to the child of a prominent citizen. Most are laborers.

Barbarian: In the secluded valleys of the Cairn Hills, primitive traditions hold strong and humans at times seem more like beasts than like men. In the vast swamp to the south, wiry, feral humans fiercely contest small patches of dry land, narrowly holding out against lizardfolk and more horrible denizens of the murky marsh.

Bard: Bards looking for an interesting way to fit into Diamond Lake need look no further than the Emporium. Players looking for a slightly less debauched hook might make good performers at the Spinning Giant (area **15**) or another unnamed venue.

Cleric: For the easiest fit, encourage the players to select Heironeous, St. Cuthbert, Obad-Hai, or Wee Jas as their deity, which will allow them to interact with a local faith. (Temples to Wee Jas and Obad-Hai just outside the town proper will be covered in *Dungeon* #125). If those gods don't appeal to your player, consider the character an adjunct cleric "loaned" to an allied local temple or a lone prophet amid the common folk of Diamond Lake.

Druid: Druids fit perfectly into the Bronzewood Lodge community (described with Diamond Lake's hinterlands in *Dungeon* #125), and might get into the campaign as representatives of Nogwier, the cleric of Obad-Hai who leads that community and who sends them into the hills chasing stories of unkillable undead and unnatural green worms.

Fighter: Most fighters in Diamond Lake are part of the garrison contingent, but a few work as muscle for the mine managers. For an interesting spin, consider making a PC fighter a deputy serving under the corrupt Sheriff Cubbin (area **8**).

Monk: Monks native to the Diamond Lake region uniformly come from the Twilight Monastery, an edifice located just outside the town and described in *Dungeon* #125. A PC monk might befriend another PC before the campaign begins, making him an ideal invite when the other PC learns of the Whispering Cairn.

Paladin: The Chapel of Heironeous (area **12**) regularly houses one or two young paladins from the Free City, who work within the garrison sanctuary as a lesson in humility on a path to bigger and better things within the greater church. A paladin beholden to St. Cuthbert or Wee Jas would be a minor figurehead in the cult, uniformly respected by the flock.

Ranger: Few rangers dwell within Diamond Lake, but the druidic community at the Bronzewood Lodge includes several who might have reason to regularly visit Diamond Lake. Other rangers might come from the wild tribes of the Cairn Hills or the Mistmarsh.

Rogue: Rogues are right at home nearly anywhere in Diamond Lake, but especially in vice dens like the Emporium or the Midnight Salute. Each of the mine managers sponsors at least one gang of toughs, making a rogue PC a great point of contact with the town's seedy underworld. For a compelling challenge, make the PC a gofer for Balabar Smenk.

Sorcerer: The Emporium is always on the lookout for charismatic exhibitors with a magical trick up their sleeve—the flashier the better. Sorcerers might also be affiliated with a street gang that frequents the Feral Dog or might be in the employ of one of the mine managers.

Wizard: Consider apprenticing wizard characters to Allustan (area **18**), one of the central NPCs in the Age of Worms Adventure Path. Such characters will feel even closer to the action of the campaign, and will serve as excellent interlocutors between the party and their arcane patron.

Next Issue: *Diamond Lake's hinterlands, encounter tables, setting conversion notes, random rumors, and as many stat blocks as we can fit.*

GOIN' POSTAL
RSI P.B.M.
EXPLORE NEW WORLDS...
MEET INTERESTING PEOPLE...
AND KILL THEM!
WRITE TODAY FOR FREE SETUP AND RULES
REALITY SIMULATIONS P.O. BOX 22400 TEMPE, AZ 85285
(480) 967-7979 * FAX (480) 894-2028 E-MAIL RSI@REALITY.COM

SHARDS OF EBERRON PART 2

TEMPLE OF THE Scorpion God

BY JAMES WYATT AND ANDY COLLINS
BY RAMÓN PÉREZ
BY KYLE HUNTER

EBERRON, MID-LEVEL (6TH–12TH), DUNGEON CRAWL

Somewhere deep beneath the city of Sharn, an insane villain plots to cast the city of towers into a massive lake of fire. In order to save the city, the PCs must find the one thing that can stop him, an enormous Siberys dragonshard hidden somewhere in the jungles of the lost continent of Xen'drik.

"Temple of the Scorpion God" is an EBERRON adventure designed for four 7th-level characters, scalable for levels 6–9. This adventure is part two of the three-part Shards of EBERRON Campaign Arc, which originally appeared as the D&D Open adventure at Gen Con Indy 2004. While the story follows "Crypt of Crimson Stars" from DUNGEON #123, it is also easy to run as a stand-alone adventure.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Lamishal Armare is the last scion of an Aundairian noble family that was destroyed by Brelish troops during the Last War. Consumed by a burning desire for revenge and presumed dead by the governments of both Breland and Aundair, Lamishal vowed to exact his vengeance upon the people of Breland for the death of his family and the destruction of his estate. After years of study at the wizard academy at Arcanix he journed to Sharn and stuck a deal with Tophran Damilek, one of the largest dragonshard merchants in the city.

Lamishal had uncovered the possible locations of several large and powerful dragonshards during his research at Arcanix. He offered to share these locations with Tophran who could then use his resources to track them down and bring them back to Sharn. The two men agreed to share any resulting profits equally, after a deduction had been made for Tophran's expenses.

THE STORY SO FAR

In "Crypt of Crimson Stars," Tophran sent the PCs to a crypt on the Talenta Plains in search of the legendary Crimson Dragonshard, a massive Eberron dragonshard lost decades ago. The party dealt with a fanatic band of halfling nomads that considered the crypt holy ground. Once inside they overcame ferocious monsters and deadly traps before facing the final guardian mummy and claming their prize. When they make their triumphant return to Sharn, however, they find their employer has vanished.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

Shortly after their return, an one of Tophran's agents contacts the PCs. She explains that since their departure Tophran has been forced to go into hiding, and his current whereabouts are a closely guarded secret. She arranges a clandestine meeting between the party

and Tophran at Kavv's, a little-known restaurant in the Clifftop district of Upper Dura.

At the meeting, Tophran explains that his business partner Lamishal Armare has betrayed him and stolen several of his most powerful dragonshards. Worse, he believes that this was not just simple theft. He believes Lamishal plans to use the stolen dragonshards to create a portal somewhere deep beneath Sharn. While Tophran uses his contacts throughout Sharn to discern the location of this underground portal, he begs the PCs to travel to Xen'drik and retrieve the one thing that can stop this dreadful creation: the *heart of the scorpion*, a Siberys dragonshard of legendary size and power.

The PCs travel to Xen'drik and explore a lost temple of an ancient scorpion god. Inside, they face fearsome monsters and deadly traps before they reach the final chamber and face off against a group of fanatical cultists inside a room where reality itself breaks down.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

"Temple of the Scorpion God" begins when an agent of Tophran Damilek (LN male human aristocrat 2/expert 6) contacts the PCs in Sharn. If the PCs finished "Crypt of Crimson Stars," they have just returned to Sharn, found Tophran's office deserted, and are probably wondering about their payment for returning the dragonshard. If you are running "Temple of the Scorpion God" as a stand-alone adventure, Tophran still sends his agent to contact the PCs, in this case because they have a reputation for being capable and discreet adventurers.

CHAPTER ONE: SHARN

Tophran Damilek has fallen upon hard times, just when things seemed to be going so well. The teams he dispatched across Khorvaire had returned with dragonshards of unbelievable potency, and business was booming. A few weeks ago, however, Lamishal began demanding a larger share of the profits, and seemed particularly interested in a few of the more powerful Eberron and Khyber dragonshards. Concerned that the partnership might break down, Tophran decided to sell off the remaining dragonshards he had gathered and terminate his relationship with Lamishal. The day before the dragonshard auction was to take place, Lamishal struck.

Tophran returned home one night and found an assassin waiting for him. Fate was kind, and although he was wounded, Tophran managed to kill the assassin with a quick rapier thrust. The damage was done, however, as Tophran's entire stock of dragonshards had been stolen. Pursued by shadowy figures and with no dragonshards for the auction, Tophran had no choice but to disappear and regroup.

Now, he gathers his resources for a retributive strike. When he learns that the PCs have returned to Sharn with a powerful Eberron dragonshard, he dispatches Kistal Ohmfoot (N female shifter rogue 4) to contact the PCs and arrange a meeting.

Kistal has been working with Tophran for years; he uses her to deliver his most important and confidential messages throughout the city. When she finds the PCs she tells them that she has a message for them from Tophran Damilek and hands them a small note. After she makes her delivery, she doesn't want to stick around. If the PCs question her she informs them that Tophran has gone into hiding and she doesn't know where he is staying (which is the truth). She is absolutely loyal to Tophran, and resists giving the PCs any more information.

If you are running "Temple of the Scorpion God" as a stand-alone adventure, a DC 15 Knowledge (local) or Gather Information check reveals that Tophran is one of the largest dragonshard merchants in the city.

I have uncovered a plot that threatens the future of the entire city. You have proven yourselves both capable and discreet in the past, and I need both of those qualities now. Meet me at Kavv's restaurant 43 Barrington Way Clifftop at sunset tonight. Do not fail me.

TD

KAVV'S

Kavv's is a little-known restaurant in the Clifftop district of Sharn. Its only entrance lies in a dead-end back alley, and its owners take care to maintain a low profile. The door to the restaurant has faded to dull gray with age. A wooden sign marked "Kavv's" hangs above the door on a rusted metal hook that creaks as it sways in the wind.

The restaurant's interior presents an intimate and cozy atmosphere. Dim light illuminates about twenty diners eating at small tables scattered throughout the room. A luxurious carpet covers the floor and several fine paintings hang on the walls. While most of the diners are engaged in conversation, sound inside the restaurant seems muted, granting at least the illusion of privacy. The quiet sound of a stringed instrument floats on the air, although no one seems to be playing. The food smells absolutely delicious.

As soon as the PCs enter, a waiter directs them to a corner table in the back of the restaurant. Tophran rises to greet the PCs as they approach.

The man standing by the table is small, thin, and middle-aged, with white hair and a bushy mustache. His plain but well-made clothes hang loosely on him. His face looks tired and worn, but his greeting is lively enough.

Tophran thanks the PCs for coming and invites them to sit down. If the PCs completed their mission in "Crypt of Crimson Stars" he

congratulates them on their success, and happily hands over the promised reward in exchange for the dragonshard. As the meal progresses (the food is excellent), he explains that his business partner, a man named Lamishal, has stolen several of his most powerful dragonshards, and recently attempted to have him assassinated. Tophran is concerned that Lamishal may be up to something more devious than theft and murder. Based on information gathered from the corpse of the slain assassin, Tophran believes that Lamishal intends to move against Sharn itself. Many of the shards that he stole were powerful relics recently recovered from across Khorvaire. While each of them commands a great deal of power individually, together they represent a source of magical energy capable of destroying the entire city. Tophran has discreetly contacted some of his allies in the various dragonmarked houses, and they have detected a nexus of magical power building beneath Sharn. While they have been unable to discern the exact location of the conflux, they believe that if the power continues to grow at its current rate, a catastrophic release of magical energy is inevitable within weeks.

Tophran believes that a device capable of reversing the power of the other dragonshards exists in the jungles of Xen'drik, crafted from a dragonshard larger and more powerful than any that have been recovered so far. It is known as the *heart of the scorpion*. So far, every expedition that has been sent to retrieve it has disappeared in the mysterious Xen'drik jungle. This time, Tophran has managed to convince house Lyrandar to lend him the services of one of their airships. He plans to use the airship to fly over the jungle directly to the temple, hopefully bypassing whatever destroyed the other expeditions, as well as giving the PCs a chance to return with the dragonshard before it is too late.

Tophran offers the PCs 6,000 gp if they return with the *heart of the scorpion*, and he begs them to consider the city's future. Hundreds of thousands of lives are at stake. He also implores them not to tell anyone about the impending threat. Even if the PCs were believed, the potential panic that it would cause would be almost as large a disaster as whatever Lamishal is plotting. In fact, some shortsighted city officials would likely try to arrest anyone who started such a rumor, upon the pretext of keeping order within the city.

Tophran is willing to answer questions from the PCs to the best of his knowledge. Assuming the PCs accept the mission, Tophran tells them where to meet the airship the next morning. He thanks them, but requests that they act with all possible haste, or he doesn't know what they will find when they return.

THE JOURNEY TO XEN'DRIK

The airship captain waits for the PCs the next morning. It is a four-day journey by airship to the lost temple. The route takes the PCs over hundreds of miles of ocean before they begin passing over seemingly endless tropical forest. About mid-afternoon on the fourth day, the captain orders the airship to stop when he sees the ruins of a jungle temple poking through the trees.

The crew drops anchor, lowers a rope ladder, and wishes the PCs luck on their expedition. Under no circumstances do any of them leave the airship and enter the jungle. The captain informs the party that the airship will wait for 24 hours before it departs, so they had better be back by then. Once the PCs are on the ground, it is a half-mile trek through the jungle to the ruins.

CHAPTER TWO: THE TEMPLE RUINS

The *heart of the scorpion* is hidden inside an ancient ruined temple constructed by the long-lost giant civilization of Xen'drik. This once-massive complex has been falling into ruin for thousands of years since that civilization was destroyed. The structure originally covered several hundred square yards and rose an incredible 500 feet above the jungle canopy, but is now a mere shadow of its former self. The building is collapsed and overgrown, but one relatively small section around the temple's original entry hall remains intact.

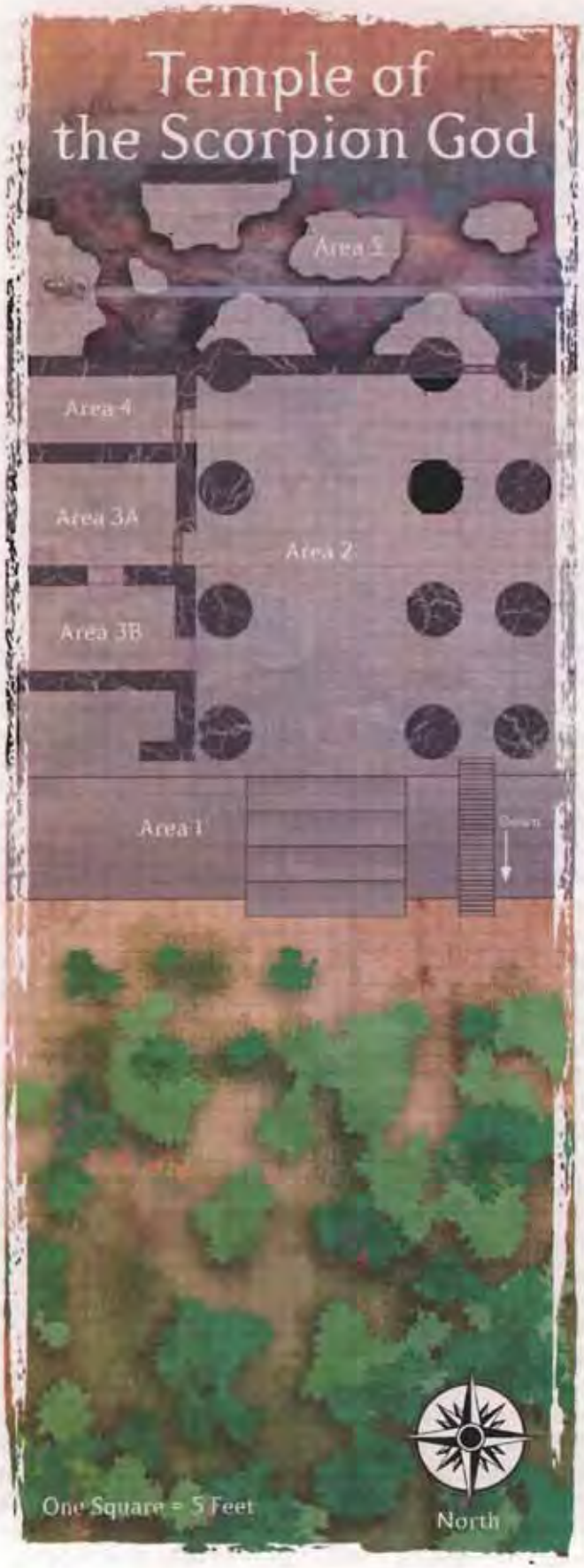
Although the giant civilization disappeared long ago, the temple is not uninhabited. Drow, the mysterious dark elves of this continent and former slaves of the giants, continue to occupy what is left of the ruin. In a darkly ironic turn of events, they have captured and enslaved several ettins, and with them they defend what they now venerate as a holy sanctuary of their dark scorpion god.

1. WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE (EL 8)

An enormous set of stairs rises from the jungle floor to a mammoth entry hall lined with gargantuan stone pillars. Alongside these stairs, a long flight of steps carved to a more manageable size climbs to the massive stone platform. To the left of the entry hall stand several adobe huts. These huts are jumbled together in a structure resembling a beehive; there are at least four vertical layers between the great stone platform and the crumbling ceiling above it, though the upper layers appear decrepit and unused.

The smaller stairs require two squares of movement per 5 feet of ascent, and allow descent at normal speed. The giant-sized stairs cannot be traversed with normal movement. Each stair is 5 feet high. Medium characters can reach the top of a stair and pull themselves up by making a DC 15 Climb check for each of the five stairs. Small characters can climb up with a DC 20 Climb check.

Creatures: The drow emerge from their cave-huts as the PCs approach. Their night-black skin is laced with white scars that form striking patterns across their faces and chests and down their limbs. Tight braids tie back their white hair from their faces. They wear



light helmets and armor formed from the chitin of some monstrous scorpion, complete with long, curved tails arcing behind their heads.

In the second round of combat, an additional threat emerges from the ground behind the PCs: a bulette. This ravenous predator attacks the nearest creature (one of the PCs, almost certainly) and fights to the death.

Drow Fighters (6) **CR 2**
Male drow elf fighter 1
NE Medium humanoid
Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Spot +3, Listen +3
Languages Common, Drow Sign Language, Elven, Undercommon

AC 22, touch 16, flat-footed 16
hp 11 (1 HD)
Immune sleep
SR 12
Fort +3, **Ref** +3, **Will** +1 (+3 vs. spells or spell-like abilities, +5 vs. enchantment)

Spd 30 ft.
Melee short sword +1 (1d6+1/19–20)
Ranged Xen'drik boomerang +5 (1d6+1)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +2
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st) 1/day—*dancing lights, darkness, faerie fire*

Abilities Str 13, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 10
SQ drow traits
Feats Daylight Adaptation, Weapon Focus (Xen'drik boomerang)[B]
Skills Climb +7, Jump +5, Listen +3, Spot +3, Search +3
Possessions *+1 light chitin armor*, 6 Xen'drik boomerangs, short sword, *potion of shield of faith +3* (consumed)

Bulette: hp 94; *Monster Manual* 30.

Tactics: The drow use the platform to give themselves cover from the PCs' attacks. Each of the fighters drinks his *potion of shield of faith +3* on the first round of combat. The effects of these potions have been incorporated into the stat block above. When the PCs reach the steps, the archers switch to their swords and move to defend the top of the stairs as best they can. They remain on the upper level, keeping as far away from the PCs as possible. As long as they stand at least 10 feet from the edge, they have cover from anyone on a lower level, and total cover from anyone within 10 feet of the wall on the middle level or within 20 feet of the wall while on the ground level.

2. GREAT HALL (EL 7)

At the top of the stairs, three rows of massive columns like huge trees support a lofty ceiling, forming a narrow gallery on the right and a much wider one on the left. The walls bear elaborate carvings of grotesque monsters, giants, and dragons. Tapestries hang between the pillars on the far left side of the hall, their colors faded with age, though their design

DAYLIGHT ADAPTATION

All the drow in this adventure posses the Daylight Adaptation feat from *Races of Eberron*. This feat prevents these drow from being blinded or dazzled by exposure to bright light or sunlight. However, light spells or effects that affect all creatures, such as *sunbeam* or *sunburst*, still affect them normally.

DROW EQUIPMENT

The drow in this adventure posses some unusual weapons and armor unique to Xen'drik. The light chitin armor and the scorpion breastplate appear in *Races of Eberron*, and the Xen'drik boomerangs are from the *Eberron Campaign Setting*.

Light Chitin Armor

The drow fighters wear light chitin armor, consisting of a few chitin plates protecting the shoulders, head, and abdomen, supplemented by bone at the forearm and shin. This light armor has a base armor bonus of +2, a maximum Dex bonus of +7, an armor check penalty of –1, no speed reduction, and a weight of 10 pounds. Its cost is 20 gp. (The +1 *light chitin armor* they wear has no armor check penalty and a market price of 1,170 gp.)

Scorpion Breastplate

The drow cleric wears a breastplate that resembles the figher's chitin armor, but adds a sturdy breastplate crafted from a monstrous scorpion's abdominal carapace and a helmet assembled from chitin plates. This medium armor has a base armor bonus of +4, a maximum Dex bonus of +4, an armor check penalty of –3, 25% speed reduction, and a weight of 20 pounds. Its cost is 300 gp. (The +1 *scorpion breastplate* she wears has a –2 armor check penalty and a market price of 1,450 gp.)

Xen'drik Boomerangs

These three-pronged boomerangs are traditional drow hunting weapons. When a Xen'drik boomerang misses its target, it returns to the thrower. To catch a returning boomerang, the thrower must make an attack roll (as if he were throwing the boomerang) against AC 10. Failure indicates that the boomerang lands 10 feet away from the thrower in a random direction. Xen'drik boomerangs are exotic ranged weapons, but characters native to Xen'drik treat them as martial weapons.

seems out of place in this monumental structure, as if they were later additions. In the dark recesses at the far end of the narrow gallery, a colossal stone door stands closed.

The ceiling in this room is 40 feet high. Two of the tapestries cover open archways, leading into areas **3A** and **3B**. The third covers a locked iron door leading to area 4.

The massive stone door leading to area 5 is warded by an *arcane lock* (caster level 16). In the center of the door is an indentation, 1 inch deep and 8 inches across, shaped like a seven-pointed star. The key to this magical lock is in area 4.

Making a Strength check to try to force open the door to area 5 causes a sprinkle of light rubble to rain down from the ceiling high above. This deals no damage, but the eighth Strength check causes the crumbling ceiling near the door to collapse (see Trap below). A DC 20 Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check allows a character to spot the crumbling capitals of the nearby pillars and the fractures in the ceiling, predicting the likelihood of collapse.

Pounding on the door also attracts the attention of the ettins in area 3, drawing them out to investigate if they are not already slain.

Trap: The bury zone is a 10-foot radius from the center of the door (only in this room, not in area 5), and the slide zone extends another 10 feet beyond that. Characters in the bury zone take 8d6 points of damage (Reflex DC 15 half) and are buried. Characters in the slide zone take 3d6 points of damage (Reflex DC 15 negates), and are buried if they fail their Reflex saves. Treat this trap as a landslide (see the *Dungeon Master's Guide* page 90).

Collapsing Ceiling Trap: CR 7; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; collapsing ceiling 8d6 in the bury zone (DC 15 Reflex save half) or 3d6 in the slide zone (DC 15 Reflex save negates); multiple targets (all targets in a 20-ft.-radius hemisphere centered on the door); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 30.

Locked Iron Door: Hardness 10; hp 60; Break DC 28; Open Lock DC 30.

Massive Stone Door: Hardness 8; hp 540; Break DC 38.

3. THE BRUTE SQUAD (EL 8)

This room might seem like the squalid home of some destitute peasant, were it not for the 20-foot ceiling and the enormous scale of the furnishings.

Use the above description for areas **3A** and **3B**. Each room has a pile of skins in one corner, topped by a dire bear pelt, spread to make a reasonably comfortable bed for a 13-foot-tall ettin. Area **3B** has a large table and two chairs, and a tapestry hangs from the north wall. Area **3A** has no extra furnishings, but tapestries hanging on both the north and south walls. Two of these tapestries cover an archway connecting the two rooms; the one on the north wall of room **3A** hangs over bare stone.

Creatures: Two ettins make their home in these rooms. They are slaves of the drow (which the drow consider an amusingly ironic reversal of their long history of servitude to the giants) and they bear their masters no great love. However, they are charged to help defend this

outpost against any attack, and they follow those orders unless presented with a viable alternative.

Ettins (2): hp 65; *Monster Manual* 106.

Tactics: The giants attack any intruders they see. They refuse to listen to any entreaties for peace; even if presented with evidence that the drow in this complex have been defeated, they fully expect more to show up soon.

If one is attacked, the other comes to his aid, either coming through the archway connecting their rooms or through the main entrance to the room—whichever puts him in a more advantageous position.

Treasure: The ettins own nothing of value, since anything they might have acquired has been claimed by their drow masters. However, the one in room **3A** killed a human explorer in the jungle a few days ago and managed to secret away a few trophies: a *potion of bull's Strength* and a glyphbook, both hidden among the skins that form the ettin's bed (Search DC 15). A glyphbook is a guide to the ancient scripts of Xen'drik, which gives a +4 circumstance bonus on Decipher Script checks made to read inscriptions within Xen'drik ruins (such as those found in encounter 5).

4. HIDEAWAY (EL 8)

This narrow room is cluttered with arcane paraphernalia, some of it quite grisly. Severed hands and heads—most of them apparently taken from giants—hang on the walls and dangle from the high ceiling.

Creatures: A drider sorcerer and his barghest servant dwell within this macabre chamber.

Barghest: hp 33; *Monster Manual* 22.

Drider: hp 102; *Monster Manual* 89.

Spells Known (CL 6th, +5 ranged touch)

3rd (4/day)—*lightning bolt* (DC 16)

2nd (6/day)—*bull's Strength, scorching ray*

1st (7/day)—*mage armor, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement, shield*

0 (6/day)—*daze* (DC 13), *detect magic, mage hand, mending, prestidigitation, ray of frost, resistance*

Tactics: If the drider is alerted to the presence of the characters before they get the door open, he immediately casts *mage armor* and *shield* on himself. If he still has time, he casts *bull's Strength* on the barghest. Meanwhile, the barghest casts *blink* on himself.

Once the battle begins, the drider launches *lightning bolts*, attempting to hit as many PCs as he can. Once those are exhausted (or if they prove ineffective), he moves to *scorching rays* and *magic missiles*. The barghest casts *charm monster* on the first character through the door, and then moves into melee.

Treasure: The room holds a number of valuable items. A large chest in the northwest corner of the room holds 5,000 sp. A cache of webbing attached to the underside of a table in the southwest corner of the room holds a small silver bowl set with bloodstones around the rim (200 gp) and a brass seven-pointed star, 1 inch thick and 8 inches across, decorated with amethysts (400 gp). The star radiates a faint aura of abjuration magic, and opens the door from area 2 to area 5.

5. KEEPERS OF THE SHARD (EL 8)

Looking through the huge stone door is like peering through a portal to an alien plane. The solidity of the heavy stone walls and floor is replaced by feelings of decay and entropy. The floor consists of platforms and islands separated by rifts filled with roiling, multicolored mist. The walls have mostly crumbled away. Beyond is not the expected foliage of the jungle, but a warped landscape of blasted rock, wreathed by the same rainbow mist. The ceiling has mostly crumbled away as well, revealing a pale purple sky.

This room, once the throne room of a giant king, still carries the scars of its obliteration by quori invaders thousands of years ago. The very fabric of reality in the room is twisted by the nightmarish forces of chaos and madness. At the far end of the room, 40 yards from the door, a huge obsidian statue depicts a gigantic scorpion holding a massive dragonshard in its front pincers.

The remnants of the room's original stone floor form seven islands. Between these islands and ledges, a chasm drops 40 feet into the earth. This chasm is filled with the fog of madness (see sidebar).

A 12-inch-wide invisible bridge of force runs along the centerline of the room at floor level, from the statue to the opposite end of the chamber. It takes a DC 12 Balance check to walk along the force bridge (or DC 10 if the character can somehow see the bridge).

Creatures: This chamber is currently guarded by several drow and their unusual ally, a young copper dragon named Kershamu. This dragon belongs to a draconic society known as the Chamber, which exists to study and carry out a mysterious prophecy as old as Eberron itself. Kershamu fervently believes that the prophecy calls for the *heart of the scorpion* to remain in Xen'drik, and thus he has come along with his servant Durvan to ensure that it does. Kershamu possesses both the passion and the recklessness of the young. The Council expressly forbade this expedition, but he came anyway. Since his arrival, he has become fairly pragmatic, and was not above allying himself with the drow when he saw that their goals matched his. Neither Kershamu nor the drow trust one another, but they are willing to work together as long as they share a common goal. Durvan is not currently with Kershamu, having gone into the jungle to forage several hours before.

Drow Cleric **CR 5**

Female drow elf cleric 4 (the Mockery)

NE Medium humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Spot +4, Listen +4

Languages Common, Drow Sign Language, Elven, Undercommon

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 15

hp 25 (4 HD)

Immune sleep

SR 15

Fort +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +6 (+8 vs. spells or spell-like abilities, +10 vs. enchantment)

FOG OF MADNESS

This mist acts like *solid fog*, slowing the descent of characters falling through it and reducing falling damage by 5d6. A character who falls from no higher than the level of the original floor takes no damage.

Characters within the fog of madness move at a speed of 5 feet, and take a –2 penalty on all melee attack and damage rolls. In addition to this slowing effect, the fog of madness contains insanity poison (inhaled DC 15, initial damage 1d4 Wis, secondary damage 2d6 Wis). Characters who suffer Wis damage from the poison are *confused* for one round.

Spd 20 ft.
Melee dagger +4 (1d4+1/19–20)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +4
Atk Options smite 1/day (+4 attack, +4 dmg)
Special Atk command undead (+2, 2d6+6, 4th), spontaneous casting (*inflict* spells)
Spells Prepared (CL 4th, +5 touch)
2nd—*cure moderate wounds* (2), *hold person* (DC 15), *invisibility*[D]
1st—*command* (DC 14) (2), *inflict light wounds*[D] (DC 13), *sanctuary* (DC 13) *shield of faith*,
0—*detect magic* (2), *cure minor wounds* (2), *resistance*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th) 1/day—*dancing lights, darkness, faerie fire*

Abilities Str 13, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 10
SQ drow traits, summon familiar
Feats Daylight Adaptation, Spell Focus (enchantment)
Skills Bluff +5, Concentration +8, Diplomacy +6, Knowledge (religion) +5, Listen +4, Search +3, Spot +4
Possessions +1 *scorpion breastplate*, dagger

Drow fighter 1 (3); hp 11; See page 70.
Kershamu, young copper dragon; hp 93; AL CN; *Monster Manual* 83.

Tactics: The drow warriors use their boomerangs to harry the PCs from a distance. If forced into melee, they attempt to flank whenever possible. If they become badly injured, they retreat so the cleric can heal them.

The drow cleric picks off foes with *hold person*. Any foe on the bridge receives a *command* to "drop" whatever it holds (dropped objects are lost in the chasm). If approached, she casts *sanctuary* to guard herself from attacks while she heals herself or a nearby ally.

Kershamu fights from a distance for as long as possible, using *spider climb* to cling to the walls and ceiling. He opens combat with his breath weapon, and continues to use it as often as possible, especially against PCs who line themselves up on the bridge. In rounds when he cannot use his breath weapon, he makes good use of *command* and *grease* against characters on the bridge.

5A. THE SCORPION THRONE (EL 7)

What seemed at first like an ornamental statue or an object of worship now appears, on closer inspection, to have been designed as an enormous throne in the shape of a scorpion. The throne's back emerges from the scorpion just in front of the huge, stinger-topped tail, which arcs up high behind and above the throne. The scorpion's back itself provides the seat, while the giant occupant's feet would apparently rest on the great front pincers. The *heart of the scorpion* is clutched in the statue's massive front pincers. The dragonshard's crystalline structure is almost perfectly transparent, but veins of gold pulsate in its depths. Runes from an unknown alphabet are carefully inscribed on its facets. More runes are engraved on the floor surrounding the shard, forming a circular pattern almost 5 feet in diameter. A second set of characters has been painted on the floor near the circle of runes. This set looks more recent, and seems to be from a slightly different alphabet.

The older circle of runes is in an ancient dialect of Giant, which can't be comprehended without translation. Luckily, the painted inscription on the floor is a partial translation of these runes, the result of much work on the part of the drow. Though there isn't enough translation to fully understand the runes, they can help the attempt. The drow script can be translated with a DC 15 Decipher Script check. Success on this check provides a +4 circumstance bonus on the DC 20 Decipher Script check necessary to decipher the ancient giant runes. The glyphbook found in area 4 also gives a +4 bonus on these checks. A *comprehend languages* spell also works. If translated, the runes read: "The Heart is the lock on the door to the planes, a wall around the world." This inscription gives a clue to the purpose of the dragonshard, as well as providing the command phrase necessary to activate its power.

The dragonshard has 13 facets, each marked with a different rune. These are not alphabetic characters and are thus not decipherable. If a character makes a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check he recognizes the symbols as primitive versions of the symbols still used to designate the 13 planes of existence that orbit the Material Plane. Any character that makes a DC 15 Search or Spot check while looking at the shard notices that one of the symbols (the symbol for the plane of Fernia, known as the Sea of Fire) glows with a faint red light.

The dragonshard is heavy (nearly 8 pounds), but easily removed from the pincers holding it. Of course, touching the dragonshard triggers the Trap.

Trap: The dragonshard's final defense is a trap that has been built into the throne. When triggered, the scorpion's tail on the back of the throne swings down to sting the offending character.

Scorpion Tail Trap: CR 7; mechanical; touch trigger; automatic reset; Atk tail +15 melee (2d6+7/18–20 plus poison); poison (large scorpion venom, DC 18 Fortitude save resists, 1d6 Str/1d6 Str); Search DC 24; Disable Device DC 29.

6. THE PROTECTOR (EL 10)

One final challenge awaits the PCs before they can escape with the dragonshard. When they leave the throne

room, they find a tall man standing stiffly near the top of the stairs, a greatsword clutched in his hands. His eyes seem almost to glow red against his brown skin. Crouched near him is a brass-scaled leonine creature with a thick mane and draconic wings sprouting from its shoulders. This is Durvan, the servant of Kershamu who accompanied him to Xen'drik when he left the Chamber to guard the dragonshard.

At the start of this encounter, he is unsure what exactly has transpired within the room. He saw the airship in the distance, and is highly suspicious of the PCs. While he personally cares little for the fate of the dragonshard, he is absolutely loyal to Kershamu. If he sees the PCs carrying the dragonshard, or he discovers that they have killed Kershamu, he attacks immediately. Otherwise, it may be possible for the PCs to talk their way past him (his starting attitude is unfriendly).

The red dragon samurai prestige class first appeared in the *Miniatures Handbook*.

THE HEART OF THE SCORPION

This minor artifact was created by the ancient giants of Xen'drik out of a massive Siberys dragonshard during their war with the quori. The giants were searching for a way to prevent the outsiders from opening new gateways into this world from the outer planes. Once per day, if a character touches one of the runes corresponding to an outer plane and speaks the phrase "a wall around the world" in archaic Giant (this is a standard action), the *heart of the scorpion* creates a *dimensional lock* effect keyed to that specific plane. This effect prevents planar travel to and from than plane as the *dimensional lock* spell within a 20-foot radius for 24 hours. It also automatically dispels any gateway or portal to that plane that is currently active within its area of effect. Note that only symbols for the thirteen outer planes are present upon the gem, so travel to the Astral Plane, the Ethereal Plane, and the Plane of Shadow cannot be stopped by this artifact. Whenever a plane is coterminous with the Material Plane, the symbol for that plane glows faintly.

Strong abjuration; CL 20th; Weight 8 lbs.

DURVAN **CR 7**

Male human fighter 5/red dragon samurai 2

CN Medium humanoid

Init +2; **Senses** Spot +1, Listen +1

Languages Common

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16; Dodge, Mobility

hp 57 (7 HD)

Resist Fire 5

Fort +9, **Ref** +4, **Will** +7

Spd 30 ft.

Melee *+1 greatsword* +11/+6 (2d6+7/19–20 plus 1d6 fire)

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +9

Atk Options Cleave, Power Attack, Spring Attack
Special Atk breath weapon 1/day (30-ft. cone; 2d8 fire; Reflex DC 14 half)

Abilities Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10
Feats Dodge, Iron Will, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword)
Skills Climb +4, Jump +6, Knowledge (arcana) +1, Ride +5
Possessions *+1 breastplate, +1 flaming greatsword, boots of striding and springing*

Dragonne: hp 76; *Monster Manual* 89.

Tactics: Durvan's dragonne enters melee while Durvan himself uses Spring Attack to good effect. If there are any powerful spellcasters, he attempts to dispatch them quickly using Power Attack, otherwise he flanks whoever is engaged with his dragonne and Spring Attacks away.

Ad-hock Experience Award: If the PCs talk their way past Durvan, give them experience as if they had defeated him in combat.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

While the PCs have been running around in the jungle, evil has been at work back in Sharn. The PCs' return airship journey in uneventful, but upon their arrival in Sharn they discover that Tophran and many of his close associates have been brutally murdered, and no one seems to know who is responsible. Meanwhile, as the city prepares to celebrate its annual midsummer festival, it remains blissfully unaware that somewhere deep beneath the streets a madman is about to unleash hell. Be sure to check out *Dungeon* #125 for the conclusion to the "Shards of Eberron" Campaign Arc: "Pit of the Fire Lord."

When he's not writing D&D books at his day job as an RPG designer at Wizards of the Coast, James Wyatt works on an Eberron novel for Wizards of the Coast. When he's not doing that, he spends precious little time with his wife and 8-year-old son. And when he's not doing that, he's playing entirely too much World of Warcraft. Once in a while, he'll post something on his website at aquela.com, usually about how busy he is. Only when all the rest is done does he sleep. Next time you see him, buy him a venti mocha Valencia at the nearest Starbucks.

When not planning new fiendish ways to destroy player characters, Andy Collins works as an RPG developer for Wizards of the Coast. He lives in Washington with his wife, RPG designer Gwendolyn F.M. Kestrel, and their two noisy half-Siamese cats. He also occasionally updates his website, andycollins.net.

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

"Temple of the Scorpion God" is designed for a group of four 7th-level characters, but with a little work it can be adapted for use by 6th-level characters or 8th–9th-level characters. Simply adjust all NPC character levels up or down as appropriate by a number equal to that which the average party level of your group deviates from 7. Don't forget to modify the amount of treasure found in the adventure appropriately. Specific changes to the adventure include:

6th-Level Parties: Reduce the number of drow encountered in area 1 to two. Replace the ettins in area 3 with trolls. Make Kershamu a very young copper dragon.

8th–9th-Level Parties: Advance the bulette in area 1 by 1–3 HD. Turn the ettins into hill giants, and give the drider an extra level or two of sorcerer. Make Kershamu a juvenile copper dragon. Finally, for an extra challenge have Durvan return early and encounter the PCs while they are fighting Kershamu.

CHAMBERS OF ANTIQUITIES

BY ROBERT J. KUNTZ,
BY ATTILA ADORJANY & ANDREW HOU,
BY ROBERT LAZZARETTI,

ANY SETTING, HIGH LEVEL (13–20), DUNGEON CRAWL,

Deep under the ruins of Maure Castle lie the Chambers of Antiquities, a series of vaults designed by ancient wizards to store magic items even they didn't quite understand. What brave heroes dare explore a dungeon where the treasure can be (and often is) even more dangerous than the creatures and traps that guard it?

"Chambers of Antiquities" is a D&D adventure for four 16th-level characters, although several of the encounters herein could easily challenge a party of four 17th-level characters. This adventure is set under the infamous ruins of Maure Castle, a monolithic edifice of night-black granite built by a powerful family of wizards. The Maures sealed themselves into the dungeons below their castle long ago, and today these dungeons have become one of the most infamous adventuring sites in the land. Although estimates have placed the number of monster-infested and trap-haunted dungeon levels below Maure Castle at 18, there may in fact be even more.

This adventure presents one of those dungeon levels in detail. Known as the Chambers of Antiquities, this dungeon level is located above "The Statuary," which was itself detailed in *Dungeon* #112's mega-adventure, "Maure Castle." Characters who have adventured through "Maure Castle" should be ready to extend their exploration of the dungeons up from the Statuary, but it isn't required that you run "Maure Castle" before running "Chambers of Antiquities." These vaults and repositories of magic treasures therein could exist on their own, or might be connected to any number of other existing dungeons in any campaign setting.

Adventure Background

The primary architect of the Maure Castle dungeons was an enigmatic and mysterious figure known only as "Uncle." Uncle created the Chambers of Antiquities as a place to store artifacts and other powerful magic items the family obtained or discovered. During the Maure reign, the family studied the contents as time allowed, but due to their many other projects and designs, most of the items Uncle collected went untested. The family's notes, in books deposited here in the various libraries or in quarters adjacent to the artifact in question, can sometimes give a clue to the item's nature or history.

Adventure Hooks

"Chambers of Antiquities" is meant to serve as a continuation of a long-running "Maure Castle" campaign. After the PCs finish exploring the Great Hall, Tomorast's Hold, Kerzit's Fane, and

the Statuary (all detailed in issue #112 of DUNGEON), they can move on to the Chambers of Antiquities with ease, further exploring the dangerous and wondrous legacy left behind by the Maures.

The following adventure hooks provide three alternate ways to introduce the Chambers to your campaign.

Stop the Hordlings: Strange fiends have been attacking travelers and menacing explorers near Maure Castle. These fiends are diverse in shape and ability, yet they all seem bent on the same goal—killing. Planar scholars have identified these fiends as hordlings, destructive monsters from the lower planes rarely encountered in other realms. Divination spells have revealed that the dungeons below Maure Castle hold the key to this problem—specifically, a level known as the Chambers of Antiquities. The leaders of several local cities have pooled their resources to offer a reward of 25,000 gp (payable in a complex collection of coins, gems, and jewelry) to any group able to put a stop to the hordling menace.

Solvent Collection: Messalina is a powerful wizard who serves as an advisor to the rulers of the coastal city of Hardby (see DUNGEON #109). Her true allegiance, however, is to the even more powerful wizard Rary (see DUNGEON #103). Recently, Rary found himself in need of a powerful magical liquid to aid in the etching of several adamantine gears for a construct he's building. His research indicated that a large quantity of just such a liquid may be located in the Chambers of Antiquites, and contacted Messalina with his demands. Messalina has heard of the PCs and contacts them in turn, offering an *obsidian steed figurine of wondrous power* (donated to her by Rary for just this purpose) as a reward if they can gather a large sample of the liquid, known to alchemists as *aurijiah*. She provides the PCs with a *force jug*, a 1-gallon container made of pure force that can be used to safely contain and transport especially volatile or dangerous liquids. She does not reveal that Rary is her patron, although a character who can make a DC 40 Knowledge (local) or bardic knowledge check knows of her connection to the traitorous wizard.

Obscure Research: The PCs, or one of their patrons, must research a particularly obscure topic, such as the truename of a minor demon lord. After several frustrating days in local libraries, the only fruit of this research is the name of a fantastically rare book: the *Codex of Dead Names*. Unfortunately, the last three known copies of this book were destroyed in a fire many years ago. Yet copies of the work may still exist, for it was penned by one Elluvia Maure, one of the scions of the Maure family line. The Chambers of Antiquities are said to contain a massive library, and if a copy of this obscure book still exists, it is likely to be found here.

THE CHAMBERS OF ANTIQUITIES

The Chambers of Antiquities are in good repair, since the rooms here were constructed to withstand the test of time. Just shy of 1,000 years old, the granite and iron-reinforced walls remain solid and true. Unless otherwise noted, ceiling height remains a constant 10 feet, and doors are of iron.

Some of the doors in the Chambers are solid slabs of granite that display no obvious opening mechanisims. These are known as baton doors, since they can be opened and closed only by the touch of a magical granite baton. When so triggered, the door slides left to allow access to the space beyond. If the PCs explored the Statuary, they may possess one of these batons already (such as the one found in area **108** of that level). Another granite baton is located on this level in area **24**. Without a granite baton, the PCs can open a baton door with force or a *knock* spell. Alternately, a character who can make a DC 45 Open Lock check can temporarily disable the door, causing it to open for one minute before it closes automatically.

Iron Door: 2 in. thick; Hardness 10, hp 60; Break DC 28.

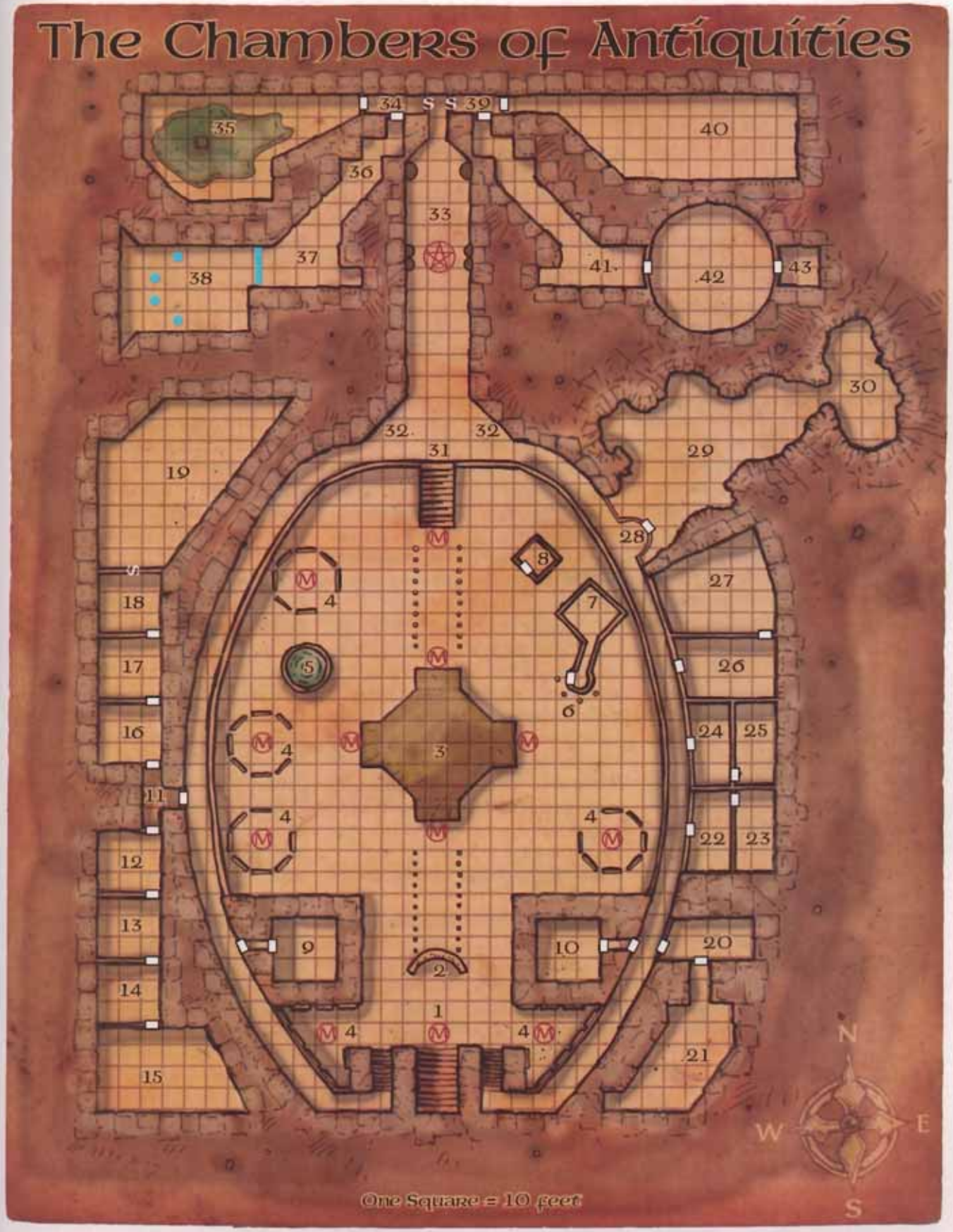
Baton Door: 6 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 120; Break DC 28.

Magically Treated Reinforced Masonry Wall: 1 ft. thick; Hardness 16; hp 360; Break DC 65; Climb DC 15.

Maure Symbols (EL 9)

At several points in the Chambers of Antiquities, carefully engraved permanent *symbols* have been worked into the floor. These *symbols* all look alike: a stylized capital M inscribed in a circle—the Maure family crest. A *symbol* activates as soon as any creature within 60 feet looks at it, reads it, touches it, or passes over it. These *symbols* have random effects each time they are triggered—roll d% when a *symbol* is triggered.

d% Roll	*Symbol* effect
01–25	*Fear*
26–50	*Insanity*
51–75	*Stunning*
76–100	*Weakness*


The Chambers of Antiquities
34
S
S
39
35
40
36
33
37
38
41
42
43
30
32
32
31
29
19
28
8
27
18
4
7
17
5
26
6
16
24
25
4
3
11
4
4
22
23
12
13
9
10
20
2
14
1
4
4
21
15
N
W
E
S
One Square = 10 feet

Maure *Symbol* Trap: CR 9; spell; spell trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*symbol of fear* [DC 19], *insanity* [DC 22], *stunning* [DC 20], or *weakness* [DC 20], 20th-level wizard, spell effect); Search DC 33; Disable Device DC 33.

1. Southern Entrance

A gigantic chamber stretches to the north and out of sight. Here and there, faintly flickering torches cast fitful glows about the cavernous room, their illumination enough to convey the scale of the chamber but not reveal the details of what lurks within. Numerous large and bulky shapes loom in the chamber, including one that could be a tree mounted on an upraised dais in the room's center. Small mounds of debris are scattered on the floor here and there: upturned books, piles of rubble, and tangled, partially destroyed skeletons. A five-foot-diameter round symbol is engraved into the black marble floor at the top of the stairs—a stylized "M" set in a circle.

Torchlight from numerous everburning torches fills the room with shadowy illumination. The ceiling in this vast chamber arcs upward to a vaulted height of 120 feet above the floor. The balcony that circles the room's perimeter is twenty feet off the ground.

The symbol on the floor is the Maure family crest. Unlike the other Maure symbols on the floor, this one is no longer active, having been disarmed some time ago by a rogue who was quickly ruined a few moments later by the Seven-Headed Juggernaut. The skeletons scattered throughout the area are the remains of other adventurers or hordlings that have fallen to the Seven-Headed Juggernaut. Most have parts missing; none have any valuable gear on them.

2. Inlaid Names

The black marble floor here is inscribed with ten twisted runes formed from inlaid silver and written in a tangled, hateful-looking script arrayed in a gentle arc. Beyond the arc of runes, a twin row of pillars marches north toward the large upraised platform in the room's center.

These runes are the names of the ten Maure scions. Written in Abyssal, they read from left to right: Afelbain, Vexxus, Elluvia, Bersteck, Hollowix, Zenebar, Sowac, Anaehesh, Fenel, and Aspong.

3. Guardian of Antiquity (EL 18)

A large stone octagonal dais rises five feet out of the floor here, with four two-and-a-half-foot risers surrounding it. A gargantuan statue of a seven-headed hydra crouches on the dais, its pose one of watchful wrath. Flickering lights from the surrounding torches gloomily illuminate the statue, which seems to be made of iron.

A functional Maure *symbol* trap is located at the four compass points around the dais.

Creature: The hydra statue is in fact a dangerous construct. Called the Seven-Headed Juggernaut, this destructive creature represents one of Uncle's greatest discoveries. What better guardian than this, he thought, to guard the Maure experiments and studies? And guard it does.

The Juggernaut keeps a watchful eye and ear on the central vault. Certain actions cause it to activate. A character attempting to climb up onto the dais wakens it, as does anyone who tries to enter any of the bookstacks (area 4). Any attempt to open the doors into the central vault (areas 1–8) also triggers its awakening. Finally, any attempt to harm it with weapons or spells causes it to awaken and defend itself.

Seven-Headed Juggernaut: hp 307; see Appendix 2.

Tactics: The juggernaut pursues interlopers incessantly, but it won't break down walls or corridors to do so. Instead, it stands vigil at the location the intruders fled from for up to 48 hours before it begins patrolling the immense inner chamber. Once activated, the Juggernaut remains so for 3 days, after which time it returns to its dormant state here at area 3.

4. Bookstacks

Each of these locations contain numerous bookcases made of a strange dull-gray fire-resistant metal comparable in quality to magically reinforced steel. When the juggernaut activates, folding metal sheets drop down over the fronts of these shelves, protecting the scrolls and books from danger. These lids also close if any spells with the fire descriptor are cast within 10 feet of these magical containments. This magical mechanism is timed, and the lids open 8 hours later unless fire is still in the area surrounding the cases.

Bookcases: Hardness 16; hp 80 (immune to fire); Open Lock DC 40; Break DC 32.

Treasure: Each of the area 4 locations contains 500 gp worth of rare books. A character who uses these books for research gains a +1 circumstance bonus on any Knowledge check.

5. Pool of Afterthoughts

A pool of bright blue water shimmers here. The pool itself is ringed by a low rim of strange yellow marble that glows with an almost indiscernible yellow radiance.

This pool is one of the few magical objects stored in the Chambers of Antiquities that was actually built by the Maures rather than found elsewhere and brought back. A living creature that enters the pool immediately becomes ethereal, along with any equipment he carries—this effect works for any one creature only once per day. The creature remains ethereal as long as he remains in the pool; if he moves a distance on the Ethereal Plane that would place him outside of the pool on the Material Plane, he immediately returns to a solid state.

While ethereal within the pool, thoughts and memories become crystal clear and organized. A creature that spends even one round in this state is affected by a *restoration* spell; a creature that spends eight hours in the pool is affected by a *greater restoration* spell. Additionally, the time required to prepare spells is halved while in the pool, and creatures need only rest for four hours in order to regain the capacity to prepare spells (properties that become evident with a DC 20 Knowledge [arcana] check). Spontaneous spellcasters like sorcerers or bards do not gain this benefit from the pool.

Unfortunately, rest within the pool does not come without peril. A creature that spends more than an hour in the pool becomes strangely comfortable and relaxed, and finds it difficult to leave. He must make a DC 15 Will save to leave the pool's area of effect voluntarily. Failure indicates that the character actively resists attempts to force him to leave. A new Will save can be made once each hour, with the DC increasing by 1 each hour. A PC who rolls a natural 1 on this save is instantaneously and utterly absorbed into the "consciousness" of the pool. Such a character is gone forever, and can only be brought back to existence with a *miracle* or *wish*.

6. Warning Pillars

These ten-foot-high rune-covered black marble pillars are arrayed before a small stone monolith. The monolith is connected by a five-foot-wide arm of stone to a large pyramid of stone directly behind it. A single metal door is set into the base of the monolith, although the door has no handle or obvious hinges.

The runes on the pillars are written in Draconic, and give a warning that beyond them lies unstable magic. The door is *arcane locked* at caster level 20th, but if unlocked can be opened by simply pressing on the center of the door's face. Doing so causes the metal door to sink into the ground for one round, after which it rises back up and the *arcane lock* reactivates.

Close investigation of the monolith and pyramid exteriors reveals that the stone is covered with thousands upon thousands of tiny runes in Draconic. A DC 30 Knowledge (arcana) check identifies the symbols as archaic magical runes associated with potent abjuration magic. The stone radiates strong abjuration magic. These stone walls are in fact infused with antimagic, and were designed to contain the unstable magical effects within (area 7). The walls are immune to all supernatural effects and spells.

7. Room of Randomness

The monolith and attached pyramid are hollow, but the chamber within them is absolutely empty and dark.

Another set of bookshelves once stood here, until the day one of the lesser Maures accidentally triggered a potent magical artifact he was studying. This artifact, the *Horn of Change*, vanished to parts unknown along with its foolhardy user. What remained was a region of dangerously unstable magic. The other Maures quickly determined that this strange disruption of reality could change the nature of anything exposed to it. The manifestation was too unique to think about destroying, so they decided to enclose the strange region within a wall of antimagic-enhanced stone to prevent any sudden surges of magic from impacting their other holdings, leaving a locked door for Uncle to use if he wanted to study the field's effects.

Any creature that steps into the pyramidal interior of this area is exposed to the unstable magic within. Roll d% and consult the following table to determine how the magic affects the creature. The effects of this random magic persist for 1d20 rounds, and continue to affect the character even if he leaves the room. A new effect cannot alter a character until the previous effect passes. These effects function at caster level 20th.

d% Roll	Result
01–25	Brittleness
26–50	Delusion
51–75	Distance distortion
76–100	Temporal distortion

Brittleness: Victim suffers a –6 penalty on all Fortitude saves, and all strikes by bludgeoning attacks deal maximum damage to him. The character's body begins to fall apart, and he suffers an automatic 1d8 points of damage per round that the effect persists.

Delusion: The character becomes *confused* for the duration of the effect.

Distance Distortion: Roll 1d20. On a roll of 1–10, that character's speed is halved and the range for all ranged attacks is halved. On a roll of 11–20, that character's speed and range with all ranged attacks is doubled.

Temporal Distortion: Roll 1d20. Time is contracted (character is *hasted*) on a roll of 1–10 or lengthened (character is *slowed*) on a roll of 11–20.

8. Lone Structure

This wrought stone building has a granite door with no latch, keyhole, or handle.

The entrance to this small building is a baton door. The room beyond the door contains many shelves. Hundreds of scrolls sit on these shelves, but are in a state of severe decrepitude and are useless.

9. Robe Storage

Both the outer and inner doors that grant access to this room are granite baton doors. The room itself is a maze of folding dressing screens, many of which have fallen over. A set of freestanding armoires against the walls are filled with numerous well-made robes bearing the Maure family crest.

Treasure: There are 35 Maure robes that can be found here. Each is about as well made as a courtier's outfit, and could fetch as much as 50 gp from a collector. Although he can still trigger them normally, a person wearing one of these robes is completely protected from the effects of the various Maure *symbol* traps,. The robes themselves are not magical.

Inside one armoire, a successful DC 25 Search check reveals a false back. If this is pulled aside, a narrow, lead-lined cavity is revealed. In here hangs a particularly elegant robe emblazoned with the symbol of Wee Jas and countless rubies. This is a potent item known as the *ruby robe of spell-warding*, and is detailed in Appendix 1.

10. Shoe Storage

Both the outer and inner doors that grant access to this room are granite baton doors. The room itself contains numerous padded chairs. The walls are lined with shelves, each of which bears several sets of well-made shoes, sandals, and boots.

Treasure: A total of 94 pairs of footwear can be found on these shelves. Although they represent a wide range of styles and sizes, they all bear the Maure family symbol prominently. Each pair is worth 10 gp. A creature wearing any of these shoes, sandals, or boots cannot trigger any of the Maure *symbol* traps in the main room, but he can still be affected by active symbols triggered by others.

One of these pairs of shoes is even more exquisitely made than the others. A successful DC 20 Appraise check identifies these shoes as being made of behir hide and padded with velvet and silk. Although they appear to be worth 2,000 gp for their workmanship alone, they are in fact worth much more since they are *shoes of farstriding* (see Appendix 1) cloaked by a permanent *Nystul's magic aura* to make them appear nonmagical.

11. Entry Foyer

A blue, green, and gold tapestry hangs on the western wall. Embroidered on it in huge letters written in the common tongue is the following phrase: "Speak my Name and Enter."

This riddle is actually quite easy, as its "name" is in fact "tapestry." Failure to speak this password within one round of a creature entering the room causes the Seven-Headed Juggernaut to immediately activate and attack anyone in this area. If it finds no one, it guards the eastern exit and waits for an intruder to appear.

12. Study

This room was obviously once used as a study area. Several bookcases, chairs and tables are apparent. Upon one table sits a bullseye lantern, old papers, and quill pens. The rest of the furnishings are coated with dust.

The bullseye lantern contains a permanent *daylight* spell (caster level 16th) that can be suppressed by the lantern's shutter. The papers are old and decrepit and fall apart upon being touched. The aged quill pens are aged, splintered and useless.

13. Brightly Lit Room (EL 17)

The walls, ceiling, and floor of this room are polished to a mirror-like sheen. A crystalline chandelier hanging from the center of the room gleams with a dazzling brilliance, and the surrounding walls magnify the light to a painful degree.

This room is a guard post, built to disorient intruders who aren't expecting such brilliance and to give the guardian within a significant advantage over them.

Each round, a character in this room must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or become dazzled for 1 round. After spending one minute in the room, a creature becomes accustomed to the bright light and need make no further saving throws unless he leaves the room and re-enters at a later time. The chandelier is made of crystal and enhanced by several permanent *daylight* spells (caster level 16th).

Creature: The room's guardian is a particularly massive and cantankerous hellcat named Miarial, bound to this area by one of the Maure scions to be the chamber's perpetual guardian. Miarial spends most of her time fondly remembering her prior life in Hell, prowling the ragged slopes of Avernus, chasing and tormenting infernal petitioners, and in general enjoying her devilish life. Ironically, this room has since grown to be her own personal hell.

MIARIAL **CR 17**

Female advanced hellcat (*Monster Manual* 54)

LE Huge outsider (evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Spot +29, Listen +33

Languages Celestial, Draconic, Infernal

AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 18

hp 276 (24 HD); **DR** 5/good

Resist fire 10; **SR** 19

Fort +21, **Ref** +20, **Will** +16

Spd 40 ft.

Melee 2 claws +33 (3d6+11) and Bite +28 (4d8+5)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +24; **Grp** +43

Atk Options improved grab

Special Atk pounce, rake 1d8+5

Abilities Str 32, Dex 19, Con 24, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 10

SQ invisible in light, telepathy 100 ft.

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (claws, bite), Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Spring Attack, Track

Skills Balance +31, Climb +38, Hide +23, Jump +42, Listen +33, Move Silently +35, Spot +29, Swim +38

Tactics: Miarial is invisible near the western side of this room, and reacts to intruders with horrible glee and delight. She pounces upon the first person she sees and fights to the death, hoping on some level to be defeated so she can escape the prison her life has become.

14. Library

This chamber is fitted with thick carpeting, pleasant lighting from hundreds of flickering candles, and several large stuffed chairs and small tables. Every available inch of wall space has been converted into bookshelves, and every available inch of shelf space is heavy with stacks of books, scrolls, and papers.

The candles all burn with tiny *continual flames*. This chamber was one of Vexxus Maure's favorite places to relax, and the vast majority of the books and scrolls on the shelves were his. This is a duplicate repository for Vex's mercantile dealings as well as records on assassinations, espionage, and briberies he was involved with. It was last updated nearly 300 years ago and contains much information on the family's many worldly projects, which seemingly stretched across the globe to influence leaders and people in high position everywhere. The many thousands of sheaves of paper, mostly brittle with age, and accompanying ledgers and notebooks contain information that can only be extracted after months of careful handling.

Given enough time, two things of particular note can be uncovered.

- A note from one of Vex's operatives in the Duchy of Urnst: "Master—The duke, so my informants claim, has great fear of the House and regales the nobles in private to let Maure be. Your insights into

the matter of their lassitude are correct. The Duchy will be no problem unless the current duke dies, and I have seen to it that he remains secretly guarded by the servant you assigned to my keeping so that does not transpire. —J."

- A copy of a note sent to Uncle: "Why must we placate Rauxes? I derive no great favors from that court, and as far as family matters we are aeons beyond theirs in arcana. Their quest, unlike ours, is lashed to the road to madness and ruin. Perhaps this Xaene, who you foresee coming from another dimension soon, should be eliminated in advance lest he find the pattern and counterfeit our claims. I would gladly travel the Current to complete the deed. —Vex."

These notes each have a cumulative 5% chance of being found per 30 minutes of searching the room's contents.

15. Spell Chiseling Chamber

The door to this room is a granite baton door.

This vast room is curiously empty. The only pieces of furniture within are a rickety stool and a large table piled with what appears to be the implements of a jeweler. A shimmering globe of force surrounds the entire table.

The table itself is surrounded by two globes. The inner globe is a sphere of force that can be destroyed as if it were a *wall of force*. Yet before magic can be used against this force sphere, the outer sphere must first be dealt with—a spherical field of antimagic. Both effects function at caster level 20th.

Treasure: The device on the table is a potent minor artifact called a *spell chisel* (see Appendix 1 for details). The treatise on the table catalogs the *spell chisel's* uses and functions, but requires eight hours of reading and a successful DC 30 Knowledge (arcana) check to comprehend.

16. Furniture Room (EL 16)

The walls of this room are filled and stacked with tables, chairs and desks like a storage area jammed to the hilt. The furniture is stacked to about seven feet in height, and the ceiling arches up to a height of twenty feet. Large tarps and thick sheets have been draped over much of the furniture.

Creatures: A group of six spittlemaw hordlings have taken shelter in this room.

Spittlemaw Hordlings (6): hp 126 each; see Appendix 2.

Tactics: The spittlemaw hordlings hide among the furniture if they have a chance, so they can attack with surprise once the PCs enter. As with most hordlings, the spittlemaws fight to the death.

17. Study

This room may have once been a study, but most of its furniture and trappings seem to be missing; all that remains is a small table and chair and a few empty cabinets near the west wall. Set upon the table is a small box.

The small box is empty and enhanced with a minor magical effect—any paper goods placed inside are preserved and do not age with time. A slight magic item, it's worth 750 gp as a curiosity.

18. Tapestry Room

This room contains two immense tapestries—one on the west wall and one on the east. Both of them hang near bookstands, though the western stand is the only one of the two containing a book.

The western tapestry is a representation of an eight-pointed star. It is golden and shines with an immense light. The tome on the stand is a dusty, leather-bound book with no title. The book is almost entirely blank. The only words within are written on the inside leaf: "Think upon the Current."

The eastern tapestry shows a massive jungle replete with strange trees and foreign flowering plants. A slim ochre river cuts through the terrain in the distance, and two-headed avians with long, curved beaks roost in the background foliage. The tapestry has a title sewn in red thread near its top: "The Land that Zomph Made."

Spell Chisel

The secret door to the north can be found with a DC 35 Search check.

Treasure: Each of the tapestries weighs 250 pounds is worth 5,000 gp.

19. Elluvia's Secret Study (EL 17)

Intricate tapestries cover the walls of this large room, depicting scenes of demons tormenting humanoid victims amid twisted cityscapes. A tall bookshelf containing many large volumes stands in the northeast corner of the room, and a full-length rug depicting a complex repeating pattern of tigers covers the floor. Several statues of erotic and disturbing subjects stand against the walls or behind the many couches and divans in the room. Two large candelabra, a pair of immense foot chests, and several large chairs and tables are positioned about the room in odd places, as if recently moved, yet the thick, undisturbed dust indicates that that is not the case.

This large chamber was used in ages past by Elluvia Maure, who kept it as a combination study, library, and personal retreat from the often unwanted attentions of her kin. Uncle set this room aside for her and allowed her to outfit and ward it as she saw fit, and in return she used this very chamber for a fair amount of her plotting and complex machinations for wresting control of the Maure family from his clutches.

Elluvia's paranoia can still be observed, since this entire room is essentially an ambush waiting to happen. The only "safe"

area in this chamber is a 5-foot square of floor immediately north of the secret door. Stepping into the room beyond this space, or attempting to manipulate or damage any of the room's contents, triggers a fantastic uprising of guardians.

Creatures: Many of the furniture pieces in this room are actually animated objects. In all, two Medium statues, a Large table, two Large statues, and one Large couch spring to life to rush the intruders. Once they animate, these objects shimmer with tiny flickers of black energy—this energy is a manifestation of the undead spirit that animates the object, and until an animated object is destroyed it remains little more than an unsettling effect. Turn undead and rebuke undead attempts do not affect these undead animating spirits until the spirit is released. When an object is destroyed, it crumbles apart to unleash the spirit—a dread wraith. The wraith continues to fight the PCs until it is itself destroyed.

As the animated objects (and wraiths) fight the PCs in melee, the threads of the tiger-themed rug writhe and animate. One round after the animated objects attack, these threads writhe up out of the rug and transform into six female rakshasas, bound into the rug as the primary guardians of the room by Elluvia long ago.

Medium animated stone statues (2): hp 31 each; Hardness 8; *Monster Manual* 13.

Large animated table: hp 52; Hardness 5; *Monster Manual* 14.

Large animated stone statues (2): hp 52 each; Hardness 8; *Monster Manual* 14.

Large animated couch: hp 52; *Monster Manual* 14.

Dread wraiths (6): hp 104 each; *Monster Manual* 258.

Rakshasas (6): hp 104 each; *Monster Manual* 258.

Tactics: While the animated objects and dread wraiths occupy the PCs in melee, the rakshasas take turns casting spells on themselves and the PCs. Each round, two of the rakshasas cast offensive spells at the PCs while the remaining ones cast defensive spells.

Treasure: A tapestry in the far northwest corner near a bookcase represents three balors looking directly out at the viewer. Each has a different fiery symbol glowing on his flaming brow: a blood-red hobgoblin skull, six crossed black arrows, and a mauve vampire-bat's head. The tapestry weighs 300 pounds and is worth 1,500 gp.

A second tapestry in the far northeast corner near a second bookcase is a slight piece that depicts three immense towers ablaze against a background of brimstone, lava and fire. It weighs 300 pounds and is also worth 1,500 gp.

The northwest bookcase contains a pair of magic treasures: a *tome of leadership and influence* +2, and a *manual of quickness of action* +2. The shelf under these books hides a secret panel that can be found with a DC 30 Search check. Beyond, in a lead-lined compartment, is a folded-up *robe of transmutation* (see Appendix 1).

20. Preparation Room

This room contains four armor racks, each holding a golden cuirass.

Treasure: These four magical cuirasses are made of a strange flaky metal. Closer inspection reveals they appear to be reshaping and reforming their own metal surfaces, constantly writhing and changing as they rebuilds themselves.

If donned, these cuirasses function as masterwork breastplates that provide a +10 bonus on all saving throws made to resist transformation in area **21**. The cuirasses are worth 1,000 gp each due to their curious and unique nature.

21. Room of Changes

The walls, ceiling, and floor of this empty room all posses a variegated color pattern, as if a mad painter had been loosed herein.

When entered, the magic in this room immediately begins to affect changes in living beings—mutating them, causing memory lapses, degenerating or regenerating tissue, changing alignment, and otherwise transforming life. A successful *dispel magic* (against caster level 20th) suppresses the room's magic for 1d4 rounds.

Each round, living creatures in this room must make a DC 18 Fortitude save. Success indicates the character resists the change for that round. A character cannot choose to voluntarily fail this saving throw. The effects of this magic persist for 24 hours. As long as these effects are in place, the character cannot be further transformed by this magic. The effects of this room are supernatural in nature, and cannot be dispelled. Determine the exact type of change that occurs for each character randomly.

01–25: *Physical*: Roll 1d6. On an odd numbered result, the character's body warps and deforms, incuring a –4 penalty on all Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution-based skill checks. On an even-numbered result, the character's body grows stronger, healthier, and more agile, and he gains a +4 circumstance bonus on all Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution-based skill checks.

26–50: *Mental*: Roll 1d6. On an odd numbered result, the character's mind warps and deforms, incuring a –4 penalty on all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma-based skill checks. On an even-numbered result, the character's mind becomes more efficient and organized, and he gains a +4 circumstance bonus on all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma-based skill checks.

51–75: *Elemental*: Roll 1d6. On an odd result, the character is immediately consumed by a blast of elemental magic and is killed (and remains dead after the 24 hours pass, although he may be restored to life normally). On an even result, the character gains immunity to all forms of energy damage.

76–100: *Spiritual*: The character's personality changes slightly. Roll on table 4–24 on page 128 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* to determine how the character's personality changes. If the change indicates a physical feature, the character is convinced this feature exists even though it does not.

22. Mineral Storage.

This room contains several boxes and crates.

Treasure: Two boxes contain chemicals and minerals in small bottles. A third box has six inner compartments containing the following metals in powdered form: 12 ounces gold (worth 50 gp), 20 ounces silver (worth 5 gp), 18 ounces bronze (worth 1 gp), 14 ounces brass (worth 1 gp), 20 ounces tin

(worth 1 gp), and 5 ounces platinum (worth 250 gp). The vial of powdered tin has a small secret panel beneath it (Search DC 30) that hides a *ring of telekenisis*.

23. Imported Goods Storage

This room contains several large boxes and one small chest.

Treasure: The boxes are empty. The chest contains a small cache of 100 pp of strange mint. These platinum pieces are rare collector pieces imported from the distant west, and their value is doubled if they are sold to a collector of rare coins.

24. Clothing Storage

This room contains numerous stacks of large chests and freestanding armoires.

These chests and armoires contain old, dirty, and often burnt clothing (laboratory clothes).

A successful DC 35 Search check uncovers a small chest in the northeast corner of the room that contains a granite baton worth 5 gp and an emerald baton worth 500 gp. These batons can open some of the doors here, and can deactivate some of the trapped guardian shields found on the Statuary level of Maure Castle (see *Dungeon* #112).

25. Alchemical Laboratory

This chamber is a tangle of shattered and ruined alchemical equipment.

Creature: All of the once valuable equipment in here has been broken quite recently by an enraged skullreaver hordling. The outsider was nearly killed by the Seven-Headed Juggernaut a day ago, and only barely managed to escape to this room. It has since spent the last several hours crushing and pulverizing everything in the room, and welcomes the chance to vent its fury on things that bleed.

Skullreaver hordling: hp 225; see Appendix 2.

26. Conference Hall

A massive oaken table surrounded by chairs dominates this large room. Each of the chairs has a large "M" inscribed on the oversized back.

The Maures often held meetings with important visitors in this hall. The symbols on the chairs are identical in appearance to the trapped symbols in the central vault, but these symbols are not magical.

27. Guardians of the Ring (EL 18)

A set of five expertly rendered statues of what appear to be humans dressed in armor with a dragon motif stand guard in a circular array around a short pedestal in the center of this room. Atop the pedestal rests a glass case that contains a sparkling ring.

Rarely, allies of the Maure family contracted out space in the Chambers of Antiquities to store their own potent magic. This room is one such vault, a repository of a potent ring from the legendary land of Lynn, somewhere across the eastern ocean and many thousands of miles away. A fabled land to many, it is rumored that Lord Robilar, a master of dragons in his own right, traveled there and consorted with the rulers of the land, at which time they granted him an honorary status in their order due to his intimate knowledge of dragons.

Creatures: The five statues standing vigil around the pedestal are in fact five fighters from the sacred order of Dragonmasters of Lynn, each under the effects of a permanent *statue* spell (caster level 17th). They remain eternally vigilant, and do not age as long as they remain in statue form.

When they see intruders enter the room they prepare actions to revert to flesh and attack anyone who tries to get to the ring they guard unless they are commanded to stand down by a Dragonpriest of Lynn. Unfortunately, it is likely that none of the PCs are of this order.

These stalwarts are large humans in ornately crafted plate armor. Each set of armor is lacquered and filigreed with gold or silver and studded with gems that depict dragons in special and extraordinary ways, such as circling the length and breadth of the suit like a body-length tattoo. The armor is as much a status symbol as it is protection.

Dragonmasters begin training from birth, and are weaned from the strongest fighters and highest nobility of Lynn. They are trained at a remote mountainous retreat, secret to all save those of the order. Every day they are fed poisons in miniscule amounts to heighten their resistances to the many poisonous creatures that they deal with (drakes, wyrms, serpents and the like) and are said to have staring contests with the more intelligent dragons, wherein they gain insight into the beguiling natures of these creatures—thus their resistances to mind influencing spells and powers.

DRAGONMASTER OF LYNN (5) **CR 13**
Male human fighter 12
CN Medium humanoid
Init +5; **Senses** Spot +4, Listen +4
Languages Draconic, Lynn

AC 25, touch 11, flat-footed 24
hp 102 (12 HD)
Immune mind-affecting
Fort +11 (+15 against poison), **Ref** +5, **Will** +6

Spd 20 ft.
Melee *+2 dragon bane bastard sword* +20/+15/+10 (1d10+10)
Base Atk +12; **Grp** +16
Atk Options Power Attack

Abilities Str 18, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 13
SQ command reptiles, extraordinary leaper
Feats Alertness, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword)[B], Greater Weapon Focus (bastard sword)[B], Greater Weapon Specialization (bastard sword)[B], Improved Critical (bastard sword)[B], Improved Initiative, Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Ride-By Attack[B], Skill Focus (Jump), Weapon Focus (bastard sword)[B], Weapon Specialization (bastard sword)[B]
Skills Climb +13, Diplomacy +1 (+5 against dragons), Handle Animal +16, Jump +26, Ride +16
Possessions *+2 dragon bane bastard sword, ornate +2 full plate armor, +2 heavy steel shield.*
Command Reptiles (Su): A Dragonmaster of Lynn can control reptilian creatures of 4 Hit Dice or less by speaking to them. This effect is usable at will, and otherwise duplicates the *dominate animals* spell (save DC 17). The save DC is Charisma-based.
Extraordinary Leaper (Ex): A Dragonmaster of Lynn gains a +10 racial bonus on Jump checks.

Note: Due to their additional abilities, a dragonmaster's CR is 1 higher than normal.

Treasure: Each set of armor worn by a dragonmaster is worth 10,000 gp more than standard value, for a total of 15,650 gp per suit.

The glass case is unlocked, since locking the case impinges on the honor of the dragonmasters, inferring that they are inadequate to the job of guarding the treasure within. It contains a *dragon ring* (see Appendix 1).

28. Unlocking Mechanism

This empty curved alcove ends in a large circular door of granite. The door's face bears a single large rune—a vertical line crossed by three shorter horizontal lines through its center section. Smaller runes run around the circumference of the door, and seem to form two different sentences.

A successful DC 20 Decipher Script check identifies the central rune as one that indicates great and deadly danger. The sentences on the door's circumference are written in Abyssal. The top one reads: "In case of emergency, use the granite baton to open this door. Move the contents to a safe place!" The bottom one reads: "Lady Arodnap rests within." This second engraving seems to be much older than the upper one or the central rune.

A granite baton touched to the door causes it to slide open loudly. The door remains open for one minute before sliding shut. Without the baton, the door can be opened with a *knock* spell.

Granite Door: 12 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 120; Open Lock DC 45; Wrench Open DC 25; Break DC 35.

29. Arodnap's Crypt (EL 20)

This large cavern has had some stonework done to even out the floor, but the walls and ceiling remain rough and natural. Tiny motes of light drift and dance on the brisk breezes that fill the unnaturally cold air in the room, illuminating a field of twisted and ruined bodies on the floor—bodies of horribly misshapen and malformed fiends. To the north, before a twenty-foot-long section of worked stone wall, sits a large golden sarcophagus. A boulder the size of a dwarf rests on top, and some sort of short message has been carved into its surface. The stone wall beyond the sarcophagus is decorated with a detailed fresco showing an ancient city, obviously not of this realm. The many towers and spires seem to be made of a reflective metal which shines in the sunlight. Two suns are visible: one close at hand, hovering like a large reddish-orange face on the horizon, another faint yellow and smaller, appearing farther away in the sky. Many people robed in white walk amongst the shadows and beneath the eaves of the building, and all appear to be wearing gloves and headpieces of some silver material. Beyond the city stretches an empty desert.

One of the most dangerous artifacts kept in this dungeon level was a simple-looking box Uncle discovered while exploring the mysterious Lost City of the Elders. Preliminary examination revealed that the box bore an unusually powerful conjuration aura. Near the box he also discovered a cleverly-sealed sarcophagus, a sarcophagus that seemed linked in some way to the plain wooden box. Intrigued, Uncle brought both back to his newly-created Chambers of Antiquities.

Eventually, he found a way to open the sarcophagus and found it to contain an ancient mummy cleric of Wee Jas named Arodnap. From conversations with her, Uncle learned that she had once tried to open a portal to Pandesmos, the first realm of Pandemonium, against Wee Jas's wishes. The resulting portal unleashed a wave of twisted and horrid fiends upon the Lost City of the Elders—hordlings. Having brought imminent doom upon the City, she made immediate restitution by calling upon the gods to curse her for her mistake if they would only save the city. Wee Jas took pity on her and closed the portal by sealing it in a plain wooden box of divine make, but could not forgive Arodnap for her insubordination. Nor could the goddess of vanity and magic bring herself to destroy what she was forced to admit was a mighty work of magic indeed. So Wee Jas opted to transform Arodnap into a hideous undead creature, stealing from her beauty and freedom, and bound her to the box as its

Arodnap

eternal guardian. Arodnap's sole purpose now is to awaken whenever the box is opened, gather the hordlings that spew from within, and return them to Pandemonium before closing the box again.

This large cavern is where Uncle chose to hide Arodnap and her dangerous box. The sarcophagus face bears relief work of many emotions: smiles, frowns, screams, and tears dominate. The boulder atop Arodnap's sarcophagus was placed there by a particularly bright hordling some time ago who realized that what lurked within was a terrible danger to himself and his kin. It even took the time to carve the phrase "Danger! Do not remove!" in Abyssal on the boulder's face. As long as the boulder sits atop her sarcophagus, Arodnap cannot emerge to control the hordlings that escape from the box in area 30.

A DC 20 Search check of the sarcophagus reveals that it is of a singularly curious manufacture, in that it has been designed so that it can only be opened from within. A DC 15 Listen check is good enough to allow a character to hear furtive scratchings and fumblings inside. The sarcophagus itself is a minor artifact, designed to protect its contents through the ages. It cannot be opened unless it is rendered nonmagical with an effect like *Mordenkainen's disjunction*, an act that incurs the wrath of Wee Jas. Unfortunately, these same wards prevent Arodnap from using her own magic to escape, now that the boulder locks her inside.

Boulder: 4 feet thick, 2,500 pounds; Hardness 8; hp 720.

Creature: Before the PCs have a chance to look this room over, they'll need to deal with the small throng of hordlings that have built up in this room over the last few days. None of the hordlings has been brave enough yet to try removing the rock on the sarcophagus—the fact that its warning is given in Abyssal is enough to give them pause. When new hordlings appear in the area, they invariably clash with those already here. The bodies strewn along the floor are the results of these battles—twisted, ruined, and dismembered hordlings of all shapes and sizes. Currently, a group of four allied dread gnasher hordlings dwell here. They attack anyone who enters the room.

Arodnap has known of the presence of hordlings in the area for the past several months, and is aware of the fact that her box is "leaking." Unfortunately, the boulder atop her sarcophagus prevents her from escaping to deal with the problem. If the PCs remove the boulder, she immediately opens the lid and emerges. Arodnap is horrifying in appearance—a once beautiful woman now leathery and dessicated, wrapped in linen strips like a mummy. Her hair is long and red, and writhes like a nest of snakes. She reacts with surprise when she realizes that the PCs are not hordlings and takes no actions on the first round after she emerges from her sarcophagus as a result. If the PCs can resist the urge to attack, she speaks to them as detailed on the next page in Development. Otherwise, consult Tactics to see how she deals with the PCs in combat.

Dread Gnasher Hordlings (4): hp 133; see Appendix 2.

ARODNAP **CR 19**

Female human undead cleric (Wee Jas) 15

LN Medium undead

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Spot +8, Listen +8

Languages Ancient Common, Infernal, Undercommon

AC 24, touch 14, flat-footed 22

hp 97 (15 HD); **DR** 5/—

SR 26

Fort +9, **Ref** +7, **Will** +17

Spd 30 ft.

Melee +1 *axiomatic chaotic outsider bane khopesh* +19/+14/+9 (1d8+8/18–20) and Hair +13 touch (grapple and paralysis)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (20 ft. with hair)

Base Atk +11; **Grp** +18

Atk Options Combat Expertise, Improved Trip, improved grab (hair)

Special Atk command undead (+8, 2d6+21, 15th), constrict 1d6+7, death touch 1/day 15d6, numbing hair, reduction touch, consume, spontaneous casting (*inflict* spells)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 15th, +18 melee touch, +13 ranged touch)

8th—*protection from spells*[D], *shield of law* (DC 26), *summon monster VIII*

7th—*destruction* (DC 25), *dictum*, *spell turning*[D], *summon monster VII*

6th—*antimagic field*[D], *antilife shell*, *blade barrier* (DC 24), *harm* (DC 24), *summon monster VI*

5th—*dispel chaos* (DC 23), *flame strike* (DC 23), *greater command* (DC 23), *slay living*[D] (DC 23), *summon monster V*, *true seeing*

4th—*air walk*, *dismissal* (DC 22), *greater magic weapon*, *imbue with spell ability*[D], *poison* (DC 22), *summon Monster IV*, *tongues*

3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 21), *blindness/deafness* (DC 21), *dispel magic*[D], *magic circle against chaos*, *magic vestment*, *protection from energy*, *summon monster III*, *wind wall*

2nd—*bull's strength*, *death knell*[D] (DC 20), *resist energy* (2), *shatter* (DC 20), *silence* (DC 20), *spiritual weapon*, *summon monster II*

1st—*bane* (DC 19), *cause fear*[D] (DC 19), *command* (DC 19), *detect chaos*, *divine favor*, *doom* (DC 19), *sanctuary*, *shield of faith*

0—*detect magic* (2), *guidance*, *mending*, *read magic*, *resistance*

D: Domain spell. Domains: Death, Magic.

Abilities Str 24, Dex 14, Con —, Int 18, Wis 26, Cha 22

SQ undead traits, use magic items as 7th-level wizard

Feats Augment Summoning, Combat Expertise, Exotic Weapon (khopesh), Improved Disarm, Improved Trip, Skill Focus (Knowledge [the planes]), Spell Focus (conjuration)

Skills Concentration +18, Craft (sculpture) +22, Diplomacy +24, Knowledge (arcana) +22, Knowledge (religion) +22, Knowledge (the planes) +25, Spellcraft +24.

Possessions +1 *axiomatic chaotic outsider bane khopesh*, *ring of protection +2*, *amulet of displacement* (as *minor cloak of displacement*), five 500 gp diamonds, one 1,000 gp diamond.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, Arodnap must hit with her animated hair. If she establishes a hold, she can constrict for 1d6+7 damage.

Numbing Hair (Su): Anyone hit by Arodnap's animated hair must make a DC 23 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for one hour. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Reduction Touch (Su): As a standard action, Arodnap can make a melee touch attack against any living creature. The touched creature must make a DC 23 Fortitude save or it immediately shrinks down to Fine size for one minute. Adjust the creature's Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, natural armor bonus (if any), and its Armor Class and attack rolls as indicated on Table 4–2 on page 291 of the *Monster Manual*. If she successfully reduces a creature, Arodnap can immediately make a grapple check to establish a hold on the shrunken creature (remember that Fine targets suffer a –16 penalty on grapple checks, in addition to penalties for their reduced Strength score).

Consume (Su): As a standard action, Arodnap can swallow any Fine creature she has grappled. This places the creature in suspended animation equivalent to temporal stasis for as long as it remains within her body. A swallowed creature that has been reduced in size by Arodnap's reduction touch remains reduced until released—the duration is put on pause during this time. Arodnap can disgorge any consumed creature as a standard action, whereupon any remaining duration on their reduced state begins where it left off. If she is slain, all disgorged creatures within her appear at full size in an adjoining square. A creature that remains consumed for 24 hours is digested, and thus slain. Only *true resurrection*, *miracle*, or *wish* can restore a creature slain in this manner. There is no limit to how many creatures she can swallow.

Tactics: If attacked by non-chaotic outsiders, Arodnap prefers to use summoned monsters to fight her battles while she hangs back and uses spells to defend herself. If forced into melee, she prefers using her khopesh to make trip attacks. She prefers to target chaotic outsiders (in particular, hordlings) if at all possible.

Development: Arodnap's soul has long been claimed by Wee Jas. Her only desire today is to see to the destruction of chaotic outsiders and the protection of her box. Her initial attitude is unfriendly, but if the PCs can make her friendly she'll be willing to talk to them at length. Just what she knows is up to you, but her knowledge of the Maures and the Lost City of the Elders makes her an informative conversationalist at the least.

If the PCs have come to investigate the source of the hordlings, she confirms that they are "leaking" from the box in area 30. She knows that destroying the box only unleashes the portal within, and refuses to let anyone take such actions, attacking if necessary to prevent such a doom. By removing the boulder from her sarcophagus, though, the PCs have effectively defeated the hordling menace, since Arodnap can now resume her task of consuming hordlings and returning them to the box.

If the idea of moving the box to another, more secure location is suggested, Arodnap remains doubtful. This location is as about as secure as secure gets, she believes, and unless her attitude has been made helpful, she brooks no talk of such a plan. In fact, there are two safer places in the Chambers of Antiquities to store the box—the endless chute (area **33**) and Zomph's menagerie (area **35**). If the PCs suggest either option, they'll get a +4 bonus on Diplomacy or Intimidate checks made to secure her aid.

30. Arodnap's Box (EL 18)

The cave narrows to a ten-foot-wide natural archway here. Ancient runes written in the common tongue have been carved into the overhang. They read, "DANGER! Off Limits except by Uncle's permission!" A small stand next to the archway holds a thin ledger, a vial of ink, and a large mauve quill. The large cave beyond seems to be empty, but the wind within seems a bit more forceful—its low, mournful drone fills the area with a sense of brooding menace.

A *wall of force* once blocked this archway. To gain entry to the room beyond, one had to sign the ledger with the magic ink and strange mauve quill—doing so automaticly alerted Uncle to the request and he could choose to lower the *wall of force*. Many years ago, though, a pair of adventuring wizards found this area and destroyed the *wall of force*. They opened

the box within and were soon worse than dead—Arodnap closed the box, but was unable to restore the *wall of force*.

A look through the rotting ledger outside the door indicates that only one person dared entry here. It reads: "Day of the Rotten Corpse—I enter at midnight of the full moon with a full complement of magical protections, including insight from the Pool of Afterthoughts. (signed) Afelbain."

The ledger, ink, and quill emit faint evocation magic. If the PCs sign the ledger, the repercussions are left to you. Uncle may still be listening, wherever he might be.

If the PCs enter the room beyond, read them the following:

This large cave is empty, save for a single, unremarkable two-foot-square wooden box. The wind blowing through the cave is almost gale-force.

The winds in this room are strong (see page 95 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) and blow in a clockwise vortex around the chamber's perimiter.

The box is a magical artifact created by Wee Jas to contain a rift to the Windswept Depths of Pandemonium. As long as the box remains closed, it is safe. Those who open the box expose themselves to horrific peril. So potent was this rift that even a container forged by a goddess has begun to fail—the box looks rickety and fragile, and blasts of pandemoniac wind constantly spew from between its failing slats. Every once in a while, a hordling—or something worse—slips through as well. The box weighs only 10 pounds when closed, and can be transported with ease. Although the box is leaking, it is nearly impossible to destroy (as it is a major artifact). Likewise, it cannot accidentally "fall open"; its lid can only be lifted as an intentional standard action.

If the creature opening the box is an outsider with the chaotic subtype, it is immediately pulled into the box and cast into a random cavern in Pandemonium (no save). For all other creatures, the consequences for opening the box are more dire.

When opened, the winds in the room immediately die down. The person responsible for opening the box hears a soft, feminine whisper in his ear and catches a whiff of roses and faint putrescence—"If the Master of this ancient box is nearby, you'd best summon her now." A successful DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check identifies this omen as a sending from Wee Jas.

Inside the box roils a single sphere of prismatic energy. Any creature who looks upon the sphere must make a DC 25 Will save to resist reaching in and touching it. Physical contact with the sphere immediately *plane shifts* the character to Pandemonium. At this point, the box can still be closed with a standard action. On the next round, things explode into chaos.

The room fills with discordant and blaring sounds, like thousands of noises made by inharmonious singers and musicians, and the box lights up from the inside, pouring forth a jarring combination of dazzling and overwhelming colors. Then there is silence for a split second and this scene repeats itself, but accompanying the noise and lights this time are ghostly figures that appear from the box

and swirl around the room, mouths agape. The sounds appear to be issuing from them, but this cannot be certain. They circuit the room chaotically, spreading their noise, and then with a blast of noxious light and soul-blighting stench they flow inward and transform into a pandemonium beast.

As soon as the beast appears, the wind force in the cave increases to windstorm strength. Medium creatures must make a DC 18 Fortitude save each round or be knocked down, while Small or smaller creatures are blown away to be dashed against the walls of the room.

Once the box is open, a DC 30 Strength check is required to close it again—this is a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity. Arodnap can close the box with a single touch as a free action—she is not affected by the winds, and is never attacked by creatures called from the box unless she attacks them first.

Creature: The huge chaos beast unleashed by the act of opening the box is far larger than most of its kind, and possesses a unique ability to drive creatures insane with its cacophonous wailing. It focuses its attacks solely on the creature that opened the box, if it is still present, attacking other targets only when this creature is dead or gone. The beast pursues its prey relentlessly.

Each round the box remains open, there's a cumulative 5% chance that 1d4 hordlings clamber through. Once hordlings appear, the chance for more to appear drops back down to 5% the next round, building up at 5% per round until another group arrives, and another, and another. If left open, the box can undo entire worlds.

Pandemonium Beast **CR 17**

CN Huge outsider (chaotic, extraplanar)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Spot +29, Listen +29

Aura insanity (DC 22)

Languages none

AC 22, touch 9, flat-footed 21; Dodge, Mobility

hp 312 (25 HD)

Immune critical hits, transformation

SR 30

Fort +22, **Ref** +15, **Will** +15

Spd 20 ft.

Melee 2 claws +36 (1d8+13 plus corporeal instability)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Base Atk +25; **Grp** +46

Special Atk cacophony (DC 22), corporeal instability (DC 22)

Abilities Str 36, Dex 12, Con 26, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10

Feats Ability Focus (corporeal instability), Ability Focus (cacophony), Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Armor (3), Improved Natural Attack (claw), Mobility

Skills Balance +3, Climb +41, Escape Artist +29, Hide +21, Jump +37, Listen +29, Spot +29, Tumble +29

Cacophony (Su): All creatures within 30 feet of a pandemonium beast must make a DC 22 Will save each round or be driven permanently insane (as the spell of the same name). This is a sonic, mind-affecting ability.

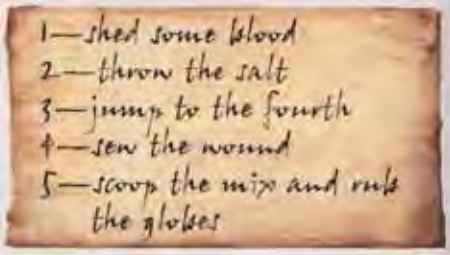
Corporeal Instability (Su): This ability functions in the same manner as the chaos beast's corporeal instability special attack (*Monster Manual* page 33), save that it's a DC 22 Fortitude save to resist the attack or for the victim to regain his own shape once the effect is in play.

31. Ruined Exit

Characters who can see the ceiling about 100 feet above may make a DC 20 Spot check to notice a twenty-foot-diameter shaft leading up from this point. This shaft has metal-lined walls fitted with numerous runners and grooves. Thirty feet up from the shaft entrance is a tangled, twisted mass of metal. At one point, a mechanical spiral stairway could extend down from this shaft to the Chambers of Antiquities below, but the machinery failed long ago and now clogs the only way upward to the Old Dungeon above this level.

32. Bookcases

The northwest bookcase contains a clue for passing the pentagram trap at area **33**. It takes a DC 25 Search check to find this scrap, though the PCs may not know what it is until they encounter the pentagram. The scrap is found in an old book on crystals. Written on it is a strange, short list, left behind by one of the Maures who could never remember how to deactivate the trap and, against Uncle's wishes, wrote the steps down and stashed the cheat-sheet here in a boring book he figured no one would ever open.



33. Pentagram (EL 8 and 17)

A large pentagram is engraved into the floor here. A gem is inset into each of the pentagram star's five points. The passage north continues past this point. On the east and west walls are a total of four clear crystal half-spheres (two per wall). They are approximately two feet around and appear to be solidly embedded into each wall.

Trap: This area bears a dangerous trap—the eternal chute. The key to bypassing this trap and safely reaching the northern vaults is hidden in area **32**. Without this clue, the PCs can possibly receive similar clues by casting spells like *divination* or *commune*. A DC 25 Search check of the center of the pentagram discovers residue of dried blood mixed with salt smeared in the center of the star.

In order to deactivate the trap, a person must take the following five steps in the proper order (starting with the least expensive gem and working up to the most expensive one).

1 (malachite): Stand on the northern point of the pentagram, inflict at least one point of damage to himself and allow the blood to drip into the center of the pentagram.

2 (bloodstone): Stand on the southwest point and cast a handful of salt onto the blood at the pentagram's center.

3 (amethyst): Stand on the western point, and then jump over the middle of the pentagram to land on the eastern point (it's a DC 20 Jump check to cover a distance of 10 feet from a standing start—the Maures would typically cast a *jump* spell to aid with this step of the ritual).

4 (aquamarine): Stand on the eastern point and heal all the damage you inflicted on yourself on step 1 above.

5 (emerald): Stand on the southeast point, reach down and scoop up the blood and salt mixture in the center, and then smear the four globes to the east and west of the pentagram with the mixture.

If the formula is completed successfully, the globes to the north of the pentagram shed a blue light and the endless chute trap is deactivated for 24 hours. The PCs may now pass safely along the passage to the north.

If the formula is botched, the northern globes turn bright red as soon as anything passes between them. These globes can detect things passing between them as if they had Spot +30 and *true seeing* active. As they turn red, a number of tiny motes of red light equal to the number of intruders the globes detected rise up from the center of the pentagram and fly toward the intruders, one mote per target, to make a +25 touch attack. Each mote has a fly speed of 100 ft. (perfect) and is immune to all forms of damage. A successful targeted *dispel magic* against caster level 20th destroys a mote. The motes are incorporeal, and can pass through solid objects to chase their targets. They persist in their chase until they are destroyed by *dispel magic* or successfully hit their target.

A creature touched by a mote is instantly transported into an extra-dimensional space similar to that created by a *maze* spell, no save. The attacking mote vanishes once it makes a successful attack.

The extra-dimensional space is little more than a 20-foot-radius vertical shaft with no top and no bottom. There is no light in the shaft, and the walls are completely smooth and black, and cannot be climbed without magic. Those trapped in the chute find themselves falling endlessly, forever. The chute is a closed space that loops back on itself—characters effectively fall for 900 feet before reaching their starting point and then continuing to fall. Likewise, creatures that fly can fly up for 900 feet before returning to their starting point. The shaft itself seems completely straight, and since there's no clue as to the nature of this warping of reality, to most victims the shaft simply seems to be infinitely long. If a character lowers a long enough rope, the end of the rope will eventually reach him from above. Likewise, a character who can see at least 900 feet can also see himself, 900 feet above and 900 feet below. Since the Maures left, no one has "cleaned out" the endless chute, and no fewer than 37 dead bodies and their associated gear now tumble eternally through this pit. Of these bodies, one was a human fighter, one a halfling rogue, and one a half-orc barbarian. These poor souls all eventually died of thirst. The other 34 bodies are all hordlings who died at the hands of the other creatures trapped herein.

Escape from the trap is relatively simple, if the right magic is available. The chute is in an extra-dimensional space, so any teleportation effect that allows planar travel allows escape. *Plane shift, gate, holy word, astral projection, ethereal jaunt, shadow walk, miracle,* and *wish* are all viable methods of escaping the chute, but *teleport* cannot cross planar boundaries and thus does not offer escape.

Nothing exists beyond the confines of the shaft, so it's impossible to physically "dig" your way out. If planar travel isn't available, those trapped within are trapped forever.

Creatures: Over the last several months, a large number of hordlings have fallen victim to this trap after being chased down the hall by the Seven-Headed Juggernaut. Naturally, those hordlings capable of flight have adapted the best to their new home, and a pair of vulturewretch hordlings now dwell here. They don't get along well, except when new creatures appear in the chute and give them something fun to torment and attack.

Vulturewretch hordlings (2): hp 184 each; see Appendix 2.

Trap: This complex trap can be defeated with Disable Device. The trap itself can be located from an examination of the pentagram. Attempting to pry any of the gems out of the pentagram triggers the trap as well.

Endless Chute: CR 9; magic device; visual trigger (Spot +30, *true seeing*); automatic reset; Atk +25 touch (see above); Search DC 36; Disable Device DC 36.

Treasure: The gemstones in the pentagram are all valuable. The northern point is a malachite (10 gp). The eastern point is an aquamarine (500 gp). The southeastern one is an emerald (1,000 gp). The southwestern one is a bloodstone (50 gp). The western one is an amethyst (100 gp).

The gear of the three dead adventurers is still here, either still worn or tumbling endlessly down the shaft. It consists of the following: 4,300 gp, 293 pp, 3,700 gp in assorted gems and jewelry, a +2 *light pick*, a *potion of bull's Strength*, an *oil of bless weapon*, a suit of +1 *slick scale mail*, a darkwood buckler, a suit of +1 *studded leather armor*, a +1 *greatsword*, a +2 *keen greataxe*, a *ring of improved jumping*, and an *amulet of health* +2.

Development: Placing *Arodnap's Box* inside the endless chute is a highly effective way of containing the danger it represents, especially if the box is left in the chute and the trap is then deactivated, destroying the only way in.

34. West Vault Corridor

This corridor provides access to the western inner vaults of the Chambers of Antiquities. The doors to the west and south here are both baton doors.

35. Zomph's Menagerie (EL 16)

The floor of this very large room is obscured by a good-sized pool of grayish liquid. On a stone slab near the pool's center sits a strange green cube, about a foot square on each face. The room is filled with a heavy acrid smell and a gray pallor floats in the air. It is quite obvious that the pool has an acidic quality to it.

The pool was fashioned to keep all but those with the ability to fly away from the box. Wading into it is foolish, as the pool is flesh-eating acid. Contact with the acid deals 1d6 acid damage per round, except in the case of total immersion, which deals 10d6 acid damage per round. In addition, the fumes emitted by the acid are poison. Those who come within 5 feet of the acid lake's surface must make a DC 13 Fortitude save or take 1 point of Constitution damage. All such creatures must make a second save 1 minute later or take another 1d4 points of Constitution damage.

The small island in the acid lake's center contains a small cube carved from green wood. This cube is a powerful magic trap. All six sides are decorated with carvings that depict a series of jungle-choked corridors

and rooms, like a map of some larger area. The top and bottom both depict a tangled maze of passages, while on each of the four sides, a circular chamber is situated in the center of that face's maze. Looking upon it elicits a strange reaction from the cube—it pulsates and the static scenery seems to come alive with indistinct beings moving along the corridors and crossing the rooms, almost like shadows seen from the corner of the eye.

The cube itself is a physical representation of a powerful magical effect similar to that generated by a *maze* spell. If any creature touches the cube, it and all creatures within a 10-foot-radius must make a DC 22 Will save (the creature touching the cube takes a –4 penalty on this save). Failure indicates that the creature is transported into an extra-dimensional maze. Unlike the spell of the same name, though, a successful DC 20 Intelligence check simply allows a character to find his way to one of the maze's four central chambers. A group of people must nominate one person to make the Intelligence check if the others choose to follow rather than find their own way through the maze. Each of these Intelligence checks indicates 10 minutes of exploring the maze. *Plane shift* and other spells that allow planar travel allow a creature to escape the maze, but otherwise, the only way to escape is by defeating one of the guardians of the four inner chambers.

The walls of this maze appear as impenetrable jungle foliage, and the roof as a dense canopy of trees that only allows shadowy light through. Each passageway is 10 feet wide and 10 feet tall. The central rooms are all 60 feet in diameter, and have immense canopies of branches and leaves that arch to a vaulted height of 60 feet.

Creatures: When someone stumbles into a central chamber, roll 1d4 to determine what manner of guardians dwell within.

d% Roll	Guardian
01–25	**4 displacer beast pack lords:** hp 203 each; *Monster Manual* 66.
26–50	**3 death slaadi:** hp 142 each; *Monster Manual* 231.
51–75	**2 truly horrid umber hulks:** hp 270 each; *Monster Manual* 249.
76–100	**1 mature adult blue dragon:** hp 276; *Monster Manual* 73.

Once a room's guardians have been slain, all characters in the room at the time gain a new DC 22 Will save. Success places them back in area **35** of the Chambers of Antiquities, in the same spot they were in when they entered the cube. Failure sends the PCs back to the depths of the maze and forces them to start the entire process over again.

Monsters slain are repopulated a round after they are defeated, so it's possible for characters to end up fighting the same groups of monsters over and over again.

Treasure: Although Zomph's Menagerie is fairly small, its weight is equal to that of all the jungle mazes within its extradimensional space; in other words, it is immovable. The method by which the Menagerie came to be here in the first place is known only to Uncle, as is its purpose (which may be nothing more than a prison and execution chamber).

Development: Placing *Arodnap's Box* inside the maze within *Zomph's Menagerie* is an effective way to contain the threat the box and its hordlings present.

36. Bookcases

The walls of this uneven hallway each have wide inset shelves that contain many oversized books.

Treasure: The books kept here are volumes on the study of elementals. There are 24 books in all; each weighs 10 pounds and is worth 50 gp.

A successful DC 20 Search check uncovers a strip of parchment used as a bookmark in a book about water elementals. A single word has been circled on the facing page: "aurijiah". In the margin, someone with a shaky hand has written, "The founts are curious for their blending abilities. Perhaps new concoctions can be made from these."

37. Water Door (EL 11)

An archway of coral stones to the west is filled with a vertical wall of churning water. Beyond the freakish wall of water is what appears to be a large room, although it is difficult to tell if the entire room is flooded or if the water fills only the archway itself.

Creature: The wall of water in the archway is in fact an elder water elemental who was bound into this archway by Uncle to serve eternally as a guardian. It guards the entryway to the room, in fact acting as the door to it, so to speak. The elemental is furious for having been left here so long, and attempts to bargain with the PCs for its release.

When it notices anyone approaching, a large face forms in the water and addresses the PCs in Aquan, "You may pass if you cast magics upon me which allow me to depart this realm. I shall not defy you unless you try to make entry to that which lies beyond while I am still bound here on your dry little world."

An *antimagic field* or *Mordenkainen's disjunction* can release the elemental from the *binding* spell, but *dispel magic, dismissal, banishment*, or a similar effect won't work.

However, if the elemental senses that the PCs have any item (such as the *elemental slaying arrows* from area **40**) inimical to water elementals, it immediately attacks. It also attacks if the PCs try to move through it into area **38**.

Elder Water Elemental: hp 228; *Monster Manual* 100.

38. Watery Columns

This large room is filled with the sound of cascading water, no doubt issuing from

the four twenty-foot-high pillars of frothing water that churn through holes in the ceiling into holes in the floor. Amazingly, no water spatters out of the pillars and onto the surrounding floor.

These four columns siphon water in from different regions of the Elemental Plane of Water, channeling it through stationary portals in the ceiling to drop into opposing portals back to the Elemental Plane of Water in the floor. These portals are designed to allow only nonliving (but nonetheless magical) water to pass through them, more to prevent any undesirable monsters from getting into the room than to prevent those from within exiting.

The nature of the four pillars, starting with the northern one and counting south, are as follows:

1) This filmy water is briny and cold, although not cold enough to cause damage. Using water from this column as the base ingredient when using the Brew Potion feat increases the duration of the final potion created by 50%.
2) This water is icy blue. The area around the two portals is crusted with ice. The water itself is supernaturally cold. A splash from the water deals 1d6 cold damage; creatures standing in the column take 10d6 cold damage per round (Reflex DC 20 half). Using water from this column as additional raw materials over the cost of the base amount required when creating any magic item that utilizes spells with the cold descriptor reduces the final XP cost of creating that magic item by 25%.
3) A splash from this bubbling and steaming water deals 1d6 fire damage; creatures standing in the column take 10d6 fire damage per round (Reflex DC 20 half). Using water from this column as additional raw materials over the cost of the base amount required when creating any magic item that utilizes spells with the fire descriptor reduces the final XP cost of creating that magic item by 25%.
4) This water looks crystal-clear and pure, but is in fact a horrendously powerful supernatural acid known as *aurijiah*. A splash from the water deals 1d6 acid damage; creatures standing in the column take 20d6 acid damage per round (Reflex DC 20 half). Using water from this column as additional raw materials over the cost of the base amount required when creating any magic item that utilizes spells with the acid descriptor reduces the final XP cost of creating that magic item by 25%. Unfortunately, this water can eat through virtually any substance, although after a dose deals its damage it grows inert (and becomes useless as a weapon or item component). The only way to transport this fluid is in a container made of force energy, such as the *force jug* given to the PCs if they were hired by Rary's agents to collect a dose of this liquid.

39. West Vault Corridor

This corridor provides access to the western inner vaults of the chambers of antiquities. The doors to the west and south here are both granite baton doors.

40. Stone Slab Room (EL 17)

This immense room contains six stone pedestals. Atop the first sits a strange rod comprised of several different types of metal. The second holds an odd lump of limestone. The third has eight blue arrows, balanced on their nocks in a cone shape with their heads touching. The next holds a two-foot-tall golden statuette of a dragon. The fifth holds a similar statue, but made of some sort of black material. The final pedestal holds a one-foot-high gold and green statuette of a coiled snake with a beautiful woman's face for a head.

Creatures: Three permanently *invisible* nalfeshnee demons prowl this room, bound here as guardians by the Maures. The demons are filled with rage and immediately attack anyone who enters this room.

Invisible nalfeshnee demons (3): hp 175 each; *Monster Manual* 45.

Treasure: The six items in this room are all unique and valuable.

Rod of Seven Metals: This rod is a curious work of metalcraft, combining gold, silver, iron, nickel, tin, brass, and copper. The Maures were studying it to ascertain the process by which the metals were fused. Market Value 1,000 gp.

Odd Lump of Limestone: When placed in poisonous liquid, this lump of magical stone makes the poison harmless as if it had been subjected to a *neutralize poison* spell. When pressed against a poisoned wound the stone removes the dose of poison introduced into the victim's body by that wound only. This stone can detoxify liquid or wounds up to three times a day. Caster Level 5th; Market Value 18,000 gp.

Arrows: These eight arrows are all *greater elemental slaying arrows*.

Gold Dragon Statuette: This gold-plated hollow iron statue weighs 200 lbs. Once per day, a creature touching the statuette can generate a Widened *prayer* at caster level 11th. Market Value 20,000 gp.

Black Dragon Statuette: This statue is made of ebon wood and weighs 100 lbs. Once per day, a creature touching the statuette can gain the benefits of *protection from energy (acid)* at caster level 10th. Market Value 10,000 gp.

Naga Statuette: This cursed statuette is made of gold and jade. Any person who touches the 400 pound statuette must make a DC 15 Will save, or all snake-like and worm-like creatures gain a +2 bonus on attack rolls and weapon damage rolls made against the character. This effect resists *dispel magic*, but can be removed by a successful *break enchantment* or *remove curse*. Otherwise, the effect is permanent. Caster Level 20th, Market Value 20,000 gp.

41. Study Area.

This room was obviously once used as a work/study area. Upon one table is an open book. The entire scene is covered with layers of dust.

The book is written in a magical cipher similar to that used to record spells. There are no actual spells recorded in the book, but *read magic* is required to understand the strange runes. The book is a catalog of entries that have to do with a complex electrical formula involving such things as "arcing the breaths of blue dragons to propel opening a gate"—most of it is in fact gibberish, and a successful DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) check confirms that the theories in the book are bunk.

An odd entry on the third page in Common stands out: "I have yet to deduce which one is lying."

42. Dragon Heads (EL 18)

This domed chamber contains a strange, triangular stone obelisk at its center. Curious circular markings and deep gouges mar the stone's surface. The room's walls are covered with lively and colorful murals of dragons dueling in the skies. Beyond the slab of stone, a shimmering wall of energy blocks access into a smaller vault. A door of the same shimmering energy is set into this wall. An immense pile of glittering treasure gleams in the room beyond.

This chamber was used as a vault entrance and guardroom for area 43, the primary treasury of the Chambers of Antiquities. During the height of the Maure reign, Uncle made sure to keep this treasury well-stocked, so those members of the family who had legitimate projects here always had a ready source of cash on hand when they needed it to fund their research. Yet Uncle was no fool. He knew that such a large stash of treasure needed to be guarded, yet in a way that getting to the money would be easy for those who knew the secrets of the room. The strange diamond slab of stone and the room's three guardians are the result of this research.

The vault itself is completely contained inside *walls of force*. Even the door in the wall is made of force. An inspection of the force door itself reveals that it isn't even a functional door; it has no hinges or handle, and seems in fact to be more like a carving of a door than a door itself. The proper method of opening this door involves the diamond-shaped monolith, and the key to its operation is known to the room's three guardians.

The *walls of force* blocking area 43 function at caster level 20th, but if the PCs try to take them down with *disintegrate* or similar attacks, the room's guardians immediately attack.

Creatures: The three insane unique undead creatures in this room were created by Afelbain Maure at Uncle's request to serve as guardians. Each of these menaces consists of a severed dragon's head that has been animated with necromantic electrical energies. Afelbain selected each of the "donor" dragons personally, picking them based on the strength of their personalities and the faults of their egos. The dragons were all adults in life, and all succumbed to Afelbain's false promises of eternal life in exchange for a few short years of service to the Maure family. Of course, when Afelbain finshed with them, all that remained were their heads and a fanatical devotion to the Maure cause. Afelbain tried to create a fourth undead dragon head, but by this point word had spread and he was ambushed by a group of a dozen blues. Uncle was almost disappointed enough to not pay for Afelbain's *resurrection*.

When the PCs arrive in this area, the three undead dragon heads floating in the air near the stone slab all begin speaking in Common. The dragon heads are disconcertingly polite and welcoming in their greetings to the PCs. Although the heads look nearly identical, they all have distinct personalities. The first is robust but cautious in his approach. The second is curious and friendly, and asks lots of questions about the

PCs and their gear. The third is doubtful, easily the least gregarious of the three, and spends most of the encounter watching and silently appraising the PCs.

In order to open the "door" into area 43, a bolt of lightning must be directed at each of the three faces of the obelisk in the room's center. The dragon heads were taught by Uncle which of the Maures were to be given permission to enter the vault, and for them, the heads would quickly comply with lightning. In theory, the heads would attack anyone else who tried to get into the treasury, but time has worn on their already shaky sanities and egos. The dragon heads are now starved for attention, and the PCs might be able to not only get them to explain how the room works, but may even open the door for them—if they play their cards right.

Each of the dragons claims to be the one nonevil, good head and that the others are trying to trick the characters. Of course, all three heads are evil, but if confronted with this, the heads argue that the other two heads have magically obscured the "good head's" alignment with vile magic. As the PCs speak to them, the heads try to win their favor with any number of lies.

- "I can help you to gain that treasure behind us! Just command me—the word is 'Mestorix!' Come whisper it in my ear so the others do not hear it!"
- "Don't trust those other two, they're evil, I'm the true helper here."
- "I've finally found someone who cares! God bless the Grandfather of Silver Dragons!"
- "They killed the last person who helped them. It was awful! Burnt to a cinder! Took the mages weeks to clean up the mess."
- "Stop talking with those other heads! Do you want to die?"
- "If you command him to help, he'll kill us all! Command me instead!"

In order to win the aid of the dragon heads, the PCs must adjust their attitudes with Diplomacy checks. Since they're undead, they're immune to fear, so Intimidate won't work on them. Each dragon head starts the encounter with an attitude score of 10. In order to win a dragon's aid, its attitude score must be at least a 40. A dragon head with an attitude score less than 0 grows enraged and attacks. Dragon heads with an attitude value above 0 do not join in on this attack, but they do cheer the PCs on with cries of excitement.

A successful DC 20 Diplomacy check increases the target dragon's attitude rating by 20 points, but makes the other dragons angry and jealous and reduces their attitude ratings by 5 points. If the DC 20 Diplomacy check fails, reduce all of the dragons' attitude scores by 5.

Once all of the surviving heads have attitude scores of at least 40, they grow silent and helpful, and explain to the PCs that in order to open the door to the vault, a bolt of lightning must strike each face of the stone monolith simultaneously. If all three dragon heads are still functional, they do so at once. If one or two of the heads have been destroyed, the remaining heads somehow manage to shrug (even without shoulders) and observe that unless one of the PCs can make lightning, there's just no way to get into the vault. Any spell with the electricity descriptor is good enough to count as a lightning bolt in this situation.

Remaining dragon heads immediately attack the PCs if they try to get into the vault by other means, even if their attitude scores are at 40 or higher.

Mad Dragon Heads (3) **CR 15**

LE Medium undead (earth)

Init +4; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft.; superior low-light vision, Spot +22, Listen +22

Languages Common, Draconic

AC 30, touch 10, flat-footed 30

hp 241 (21 HD), **DR** 5/magic

Immune electricity

SR 21

Fort +14, **Ref** +14, **Will** +12

Spd fly 60 ft.

Melee Bite +29/19–20 (3d8+12 plus 6d6 electricity plus insanity)

Base Atk +21; **Grp** +29

Atk Options Power Attack

Special Atk breath weapon, insanity

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th)

3/day—*create/destroy water*, *ventriloquism*

Abilities Str 27, Dex 10, Con —, Int 16, Wis 6, Cha 20

SQ sound imitation, undead traits, unholy toughness

Feats Ability Focus (breath weapon), Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack

Skills Bluff +29, Diplomacy +7, Escape Artist +24, Hide +24, Intimidate +31, Knowledge (arcana) +27, Listen +22, Search +27, Spellcraft +29, Spot +22

Breath Weapon (Su): Once every 1d4 rounds; 100-ft. line, damage 14d8 electricity, Reflex DC 25. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Insanity (Su): A creature that takes damage from a mad dragon head's bite attack is infused with madness. The creature takes 1d6 points of Wisdom drain, and must then make a DC 25 Will save or be driven insane (as if by the *insanity* spell). The save DC is Charisma-based.

Sound Imitation (Ex): A mad dragon head can mimic any voice or sound it has heard. Listeners must succeed on DC 25 Will saves to detect the ruse.

Unholy Toughness (Ex): A mad dragon head gains a bonus to its hit points equal to its Charisma modifier × its Hit Dice.

43. Treasure Room

The treasure heaped in this room is staggering. Mounds of coins as high as an ogre, chests the size of coffins filled with gems and jewelry, glowing swords heaped on suits of mithril armor, amulets, rings, staves, wands, and potions fill the room. Who knows what else could be buried out of sight?

The walls, floor, and ceiling of this room are protected by *walls of force*. Additionally, the chamber itself is warded by a permanent *dimensional lock* spell. These spell effects function at caster level 20th.

Treasure: Unfortunately, this horde of treasure is indeed too good to be true. In the days before the magical cataclysm that ruined the Maure family, Elluvia Maure made a bold move. She knew that the family was doomed, in part because her machinations had set up Uncle for a fall—she knew that in a few days her demonic patron Malcanthet would get a chance to ambush and kill the hated Maure scion. While Uncle's attentions were elsewhere, Elluvia stole into this chamber. She was one of the Maures recognized by the mad

dragon heads, and had no trouble getting into this room, looting the place into her *portable hole*, and then casting a *permanent image* of all the treasure to make it seem as if the place had not been robbed. She hoped to gain at least a few days' head start on her escape if things went poorly, but if things went well, she left behind a calling card to torment and mock Uncle.

If the illusion is dispelled or disbelieved (DC 24, caster level 18), the room is revealed to be empty, save for a single book sitting on the floor. This is a copy of the *Codex of Dead Names*. Elluvia has inscribed a short message on the book's inside cover: "Uncle—Take this as a reminder to never underestimate the fairer sex. Read and learn. —Elluvia" This magical tome is detailed in Appendix 1.

Of course, the magical catastrophe that struck the Maures only a few days later was even more potent than Elluvia had anticipated, for she had not been the only Maure with treachery in her heart. Uncle never had the pleasure of discovering her theft, and she never made it out of the dungeons. What might have happened to them are secrets held by the unexplored regions beneath Maure Castle.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Depending on which adventure hook you used to get the PCs into the Chambers of Antiquities, any one of the following situations comprises a success:

- If the characters release Arodnap from her sarcophagus, she can cope with any future outpouring of hordlings from the box. Award the PCs a CR 14 story award for their troubles. If, on the other hand the PCs manage to hide Arodnap's Box in an extradimensional space such as the endless chute or *Zomph's Menagerie*, award them instead a CR 16 story award for the more permanent solution.
- If the PCs were sent to gather a sample of *aurijiah* or to find the *Codex of Dead Names*, they find success in either area 37 or area 43. Award them a CR 15 story award once they return to their employer with the prize intact. Their success may prompt their employer to send them back to the Chambers of Antiquities in search of any one of the other potent magic items reputed to be hidden within.

Of course, if you simply use this adventure as a dungeon to explore, the PCs may depart without recourse once they feel that they've had enough of the dangerous Chambers of Antiquities. Their experiences and treasures should be great, and their insights into the Maure Family will have grown. There is more yet to come, but that is for another day!

APPENDIX 1: NEW MAGIC ITEMS

Codex of Dead Names (Minor Artifact)

Written by Elluvia Maure, this dense tome contains cramped but graceful handwritten pages that comprise a lengthy treatise on the history, physical descriptions, and cause of death of five hundred unique demons. Many of these demons had, in some way, crossed Elluvia's patron Malcanthet—those who weren't slain by Elluvia were most often slain by Malcanthet herself.

The following spells are recorded in the *Codex of Dead Names*: *alert bebilith**, *banishment*, *binding*, *call dretch horde**, *dismissal*, *gate*, *greater planar binding*, *lesser planar binding*, *planar binding*, *plane shift*, and *trap the soul*. Spells marked with an asterisk are from the *Book of Vile Darkness*. A wizard can learn these spells in the same way she can learn spells from another wizard's spellbook. In addition, a character who spends 8 hours studying one of these spells and makes a successful Spellcraft check (DC = 10 plus the level of the spell) gains the ability to use that spell once per day as a spell-like ability for as long as she retains possession of this copy of the *Codex*. A character can gain only one of these spell-like abilities, but may switch spells by following the proceedure outlined above. If anyone else claims ownership of the *Codex* (this includes anyone who uses the *Codex* to learn a spell or spell-like ability), this spell-like ability is lost.

Strong conjuration [chaos, evil]; CL 18th; 8 lb.

Dragon Eye Ring

These rings are badges of honor to the Dragonmasters of Lynn, though a few rings have made their way to Eastern Oerik. Their manufacture is held as a secret by the artificers of that secretive order. Each appears as a golden band inset with a gemstone carved in the likeness of a dragon head as seen from a side-view and whose one eye is intent upon the viewer.

Once per day, the wearer can activate *see invisibility*—this effect lasts for two hours once activated. The wearer also gains a +10 competence bonus on Listen and Spot checks. Finally, the wearer and all allies in a 30-ft. radius gain a +20 ft. enhancement bonus to fly speeds.

Strong abjuration; CL 12th; Forge Ring, *see invisibility*, *fly*, *resistance*, *resist energy*; Price 55,000 gp.

Robe of Transmutation

This finely made green silk robe has a pattern of purple star bursts upon it. When worn the robe confers the following powers:

- The robe increases the Difficulty Class for all saving throws against spells that change a target's shape (such as *baleful polymorph*, *flesh to stone*, or *polymorph any object*) cast by the wearer by +1.
- Immunity to *baleful polymorph*, *polymorph any object*, and any other spell or supernatural effect that changes the wearer's form against her will.
- *Polymorph* 1/day.
- *Baleful polymorph* 1/day.
- *Prime Transformation*: Once per day, this supernatural power allows the wearer to transform herself into any creature that she consumes a tiny piece of. This transformation is treated like *shapechange*, save that only one form can be assumed.

The powers granted by a *robe of transmutation* remain available to the wearer even when she assumes a new form and the robe is absorbed into the wearer's new form.

Strong transmutation; CL 17th; Craft Wondrous Item, *baleful polymorph*, *polymorph*, *shapechange*; Price 140,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Ruby Robe of Spellwarding

Sacred to the faith of Wee Jas, this robe of sparkling red looks even more impressive under close examination, when it becomes apparent that the "fabric" it's made of is in fact powdered rubies that cling to each

Scaling the Adventure

"Chambers of Antiquities" is a challenging adventure designed for a group of four 16th-level characters. If you wish to run this adventure for lower or higher level characters, consider the following adjustments to the encounters within.

14th–15th-level characters: Reduce the saving throw DCs for traps and unusual magical effects in the adventure by 1 or 2. Reduce the seven-headed juggernaut's Hit Dice by 4–8 and its natural armor bonus by 2. Replace all hordlings with new hordlings of a CR 2 lower. Reduce Miarial's Hit Dice by 2–4. Replace the dread wraiths in area **19** with greater shadows. Decrease the dragonmasters to 10th- or 11th-level fighters. Remove the pandemonium beast's cacophony special attack. Remove one of the nalfeshnee demons from area **40**. One of the mad dragon heads is automaticaly friendly to the PCs.

17th–18th-level characters: Raise the saving throw DCs for traps and unusual magical effects in the adventure by 1 or 2. Give the seven-headed juggernaut fast healing 10 and increase its Hit Dice by 4–8. Replace all hordlings with new hordlings of a CR 2 higher. Increase Miarial's Hit Dice by 2–4. Give the rakshasas in area **19** each 1–3 levels of sorcerer. Increase the dragonmasters to 13th- or 14th-level fighters. Have a second pandemonium beast attack the PCs as soon as the first is slain. Add a fourth invisible nalfeshnee to area **40**. The mad dragon heads now start at an attitude rating of 5.

other in soft, smooth sheets. When donned, a *ruby robe of spellwarding* grants a +4 resistance bonus on all saving throws. In addition, it functions as a *ring of counterspells*, save that it can hold (and thus counter) a single spell of 1st through 9th level.

Strong abjuration; CL 17th; Craft Wondrous Item, *imbue with spell ability, resistance*; Price 40,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Shoes of Farstriding

The church of Fharlanghn holds these shoes in particularly high regard, although they are also popular among many adventuring circles. They increase the wearer's base land speed by 10 feet. In addition to this ability (considered an enhancement bonus), these boots grant the wearer a +4 bonus on checks made to resist being bull-rushed, tripped, or otherwise moved against his will. Finally, they grant a +2 enhancement bonus to Constitution.

Moderate transmutation; CL 10th; Craft Wondrous Item, *bear's endurance, longstrider*; Price 10,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Spell Chisel (Minor Artifact)

This platinum contraption seems something like a hand-held drill with interchangeable bits. Each bit looks different, with a head more like that of a chisel than a drill. This potent device allows a spellcaster to implant a spell into an object, transforming that object into a magical item of sorts.

In order to implant a spell into an item, the item must be worth at least 1,000 gp per level of the spell to be implanted, and must not be a magic item itself. The user then attaches the appropriate bit to the *spell chisel's* head (see below) and spends one day per level of the spell to be implanted. If the spell requires an expensive material component or an XP component, that cost is paid at this time by the user of the *spell chisel*. At the end of this time, the spell embedded in the item can be accessed and cast as if it were being cast from a scroll. A single item can only contain one chiseled spell at a time.

When a spell is chiseled onto an object, the user must make a Spellcraft check to determine success. The DC is 20 + the level of the spell being chiseled. The DM makes this roll in secret—failure indicates that the resulting spell malfunctions when it is cast. Roll on the following table to determine how the spell misfires.

d% roll	Result
01–30	Spell effect at half strength.
31–60	Spell does not work.
61–75	The spell has a reverse effect upon the intended target (50%) or affects the wielder instead (50%).
76–90	Spell functions, but at half minimum possible power. Saving throws against the spell suffer a –4 penalty to their save DCs.
91–100	Spell fails; the item becomes nonmagical.

The various bits that come with a *spell chisel* allow different levels of spells to be imbued. A *spell chisel* can always imbue 1st-, 2nd-, and 3rd-level spells using the mithril head that remains attached at all times. In order to chisel 4th- or 5th-level spells, the user must implement a diamond-tipped head. Sixth-level spells require an adamantine head. Higher-level spells require correspondingly fantastic materials—to inscribe a 7th-level spell requires a bit made of shadow. An 8th-level spell requires a bit made of elemental particles of air, earth, fire, and water, and a 9th-level spell requires a bit made of pure magical energy. When a *spell chisel* is found, it is typically accompanied by only 1d3 additional heads of various materials. A *spell chisel* bit functions only ten times before it shatters and must be replaced.

Although a *spell chisel* itself is a minor artifact, its chisel heads are standard magic items and can be created by a spellcaster with the Craft Wondrous Item feat who meets the bit's other prerequisites.

Items bearing uncast spells are worth the same as a scroll of the same name plus the base cost of the item.

Spell Chisel: Strong universal; CL 20th; Weight 6 lb.

Spell Chisel Bit: Strong transmutation; CL variable; Craft Wondrous Item, creator must be able to cast spells of the spell level to be chiseled; Price 12,500 gp (diamond bit), 18,000 gp (adamantine bit), 24,500 gp (shadow bit), 32,000 gp (elemental bit), 40,500 gp (magic energy bit).

APPENDIX 2: NEW MONSTERS

Hordling

Medium Outsider (Chaotic, Extraplanar, Evil)
Hit Dice: 6d8+12 (hp 39)
Initiative: +6
Speed: 30 ft.
Armor Class: 19 (+2 Dex, +7 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 19
Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+8
Attack: Claw +8 melee (1d6+2)
Full Attack: 2 claws +8 melee (1d6+2)
Space/Reach: 5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Hordling abilities
Special Qualities: Hordling abilities, damage reduction 5/lawful, darkvision 60 ft., immune to mind-affecting effects, spell resistance 16

Hordlings

Saves: Fort +9, Ref +9, Will +4
Abilities: Str 14, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8
Skills: Climb +11, Hide +11, Jump +11, Listen +8, Move Silently +11, Spot +8
Feats: Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes
Environment: Gray Waste of Hades, Tarterian Depths of Carceri, Windswept Depths of Pandemonium, or the Infinite Layers of the Abyss
Organization: Solitary, pair, band (3–12), or horde (13+)
Challenge Rating: 5
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Always chaotic evil
Advancement: 7+ HD (Medium)
Level Adjustment: —

The hordlings are fiends of varied form, power, and appearance. They have in common hideousness and hatefulness, and roam the reaches of the fiendish planes, preying upon all things, including one another. The strong slay and devour the weak. They sometimes serve under strong leaders like night hags or yugoloths, but are in general untrustworthy, rebellious, and quarrelsome. Three types of hordlings are known to exist—the sinister and morbid soldiers of the Gray Waste of Hades, the brutish and violent thugs of the Tarterian Depths of Carceri, and the insane and murderous lunatics of the Windswept Depths of Pandemonium. All three types can be encountered with some frequency on certain layers of the Abyss as well. To a non-hordling, the differences between these three types are indistinguishable, and they certainly have no tangible effect on their game statistics, yet hordlings immediately recognize hordlings from other planes, and it is for these fellow fiends that their deepest hatreds are reserved.

A few rare artifacts, such as *Arodnap's Box* and the ruinous *Bringer of Doom* are linked to the hordlings and can transport them in large numbers to other planes.

Hordlings speak Abyssal.

Combat

Hordlings are combat brutes. They often have special attacks and defenses that augment their skills in a battle, but no hordling has innate spell-like abilities. This immediately sets them apart from most other fiends like demons and devils. A specific hordling's combat tactics must of course be dictated by the nature of its attacks, but in general, these creatures prefer to charge directly into melee and tear into their victims.

Hordling Appearance

All hordlings look different. When you create a new hordling, roll on the following tables to determine the fiend's appearance. Feel free to change, add, or delete choices from the following tables as you see fit.

Head
1 Wedge-shaped
2 Conical
3 Discoid
4 Spherical
5 Cubical
6 Ovoid

Head Adornment
1 Bald
2 Mane
3 Frills
4 Lumps
5 Feathers
6 Horns

Overall Visage
1 Gibbering, drooling
2 Glaring, menacing
3 Twitching, crawling
4 Wrinkled, seamed
5 Hanging, flaccid
6 Rotting, tattered

Ears
1 Large, pointed
2 Small, pointed
3 Large, drooping
4 Large, fan-like
5 Normal, human
6 None

Note: 25% chance to have 4 ears rather than 2.

Eye Color
1 Dull black
2 Purple
3 Metallic
4 Red
5 Blank White
6 Yellow

Eyes
1 Huge, protruding
2 Small, stalked
3 Large, multifaceted
4 Small, sunken
5 Large, round
6 Small, slitted

Note: 10% chance to have 1, 60% chance to have 2, 20% chance to have 3, 10% chance to have 4.

Nose
1 Wide, protruding
2 Slits only
3 Hanging snout or trunk
4 Long, pointed
5 Large, many-warted
6 None

Mouth
1 Tusked
2 Many small fangs
3 Long canines
4 Beak
5 Crushing teeth
6 Saw-toothed

Appearance of Torso
1 Fat
2 Rubbery
3 Thin
4 Muscular
5 Wide
6 Short, thick

Neck
1 Short, thick
2 Short, thin
3 Long, thick
4 Long, thin
5 Thrust forward, thick
6 None apparent

Back
1 Humped
2 Hunched
3 Knobby
4 Bristle-maned
5 Spined
6 Vestigal wings

Tail
1 Long, prehensile
2 Short
3 Long
4 Long and clubbed
5 Forked
6 None

Arms
1 Multi-jointed
2 Short, thick
3 Wings*
4 Long, thin
5 Large, muscular
6 Tentacle

*Can only be used to fly if the hordling has enhanced mobility (flight).

Legs
1 Long, thin
2 Short, bowed
3 Short, massive
4 Long, muscular
5 Long, multi-jointed
6 Snake-like lower body

Note: 20% chance to have 3 or 4 legs.

Hands
1 Large, thick-fingered
2 Clawed
3 Taloned
4 Pincered
5 Webbed
6 Too many fingers

Feet
1 Long prehensile toes
2 Full hoofed
3 Splay hoofed
4 Clawed
5 Suckered
6 Webbed

Body Coloration
1 Black-brown
2 Russet-red
3 Orange-yellow
4 Olive-green
5 Blue-purple
6 Gray-white

Skin
1 Smooth
2 Rough and scaly
3 Feathered
4 Furred
5 Slimy and dripping
6 Bristly

Hordling Abilities

All hordlings have a number of hordling abilities equal to half their Hit Hice (minimum of one). Thus, the standard six Hit Die hordling has three abilities. When determining abilities, simply roll d% and consult the following table. Most hordling abilities do not stack, so if you roll a duplicate that doesn't stack with itself simply re-roll until you get one that works.

Hordling Abilities	
d% Roll	**Ability**
01–03	Additional arms*
04–08	Armored
09–20	Bite attack
21–24	Breath weapon
25–28	Clutching grip
29–35	Energy resistance*
36–40	Flippers
41–45	Functional Wings
46–50	Elite hordling*
51–55	Enhanced senses
56–58	Gaze attack
59–65	Gore attack
66–68	Increased size*
69–72	Quick healer
73–76	Quickness*
77–80	Ranged attack
81–88	Reach attack
89–92	Sonic aura
93–100	Tail attack

*This ability may be rolled more than once.

Additional arms: The hordling gains an additional arm, along with one more claw attack.

Armored: The hordling's natural armor bonus improves by an amount equal to half its Hit Dice.

Bite attack: The hordling gains a bite attack as a secondary attack that does 1d8 points of damage on a hit.

Breath weapon: The hordling gains a 15-foot cone-shaped breath weapon, usable once a minute. The DC to save against is 10 + half the hordling's HD + its Constitution modifier. A character who fails a Fortitude save against the breath weapon becomes nauseated for 1d6 rounds and takes 1d6 points of Strength damage.

Clutching grip: The hordling gains the Improved Grab ability with one of its natural attacks, and can constrict for damage equal to its claw damage with that attack.

Elite hordling: One of the hordling's ability scores, determined randomly, gains a +4 bonus.

Energy resistance: The hordling gains energy resistance 10 against a randomly determined energy type (acid, cold, electricity, fire, or sonic). Each time this ability is rerolled, it applies to a new type of energy.

Enhanced senses: The hordling gains low-light vision and scent.

Functional Wings: The hordling gains a fly speed equal to twice its land speed. It has average maneuverability.

Flippers: The hordling gains a swim speed equal to its land speed, and can breathe water.

Gaze attack: The hordling's gaze attack has a range of 10 feet, which can be resisted with a Fortitude save against a DC of 10 + half the hordling's HD + its Constitution modifier. Failure to resist this gaze attack causes the victim to be stunned for 1 round.

Gore attack: The hordling gains a gore attack as a secondary attack that does 1d8 points of damage on a hit.

Increased size: The hordling's size increases to Large. It gains all the benefits and penalties associated with this size change as detailed on page 291 of the *Monster Manual*. Increase the Hordling's CR by 1. Each time this ability is rerolled, the hordling increases by one more size category and its CR increases by +1.

Quick healer: The hordling gains fast healing 5.

Quickness: The hordling's land speed increases by +10 feet.

Ranged attack: The hordling can spit a glob, bolt, or beam of energy (determine type randomly) from its maw once every 1d4 rounds. It makes a ranged touch attack to hit, dealing 1d6 damage per 2 HD on a hit. The range for this attack is 60 feet.

Reach attack: The hordling's claw attacks gain a +5 ft. bonus to their reach.

Sonic aura: The hordling is surrounded by a field of sonic energy to a radius of 5 feet. This sonic energy is unsettling and distracting; creatures within the radius must make a DC 20 Concentration check to cast spells or use spell-like abilities. In addition, a creature that fails a Fortitude save against a DC of 10 + half the hordling's HD + its Charisma modifier becomes frightened for 1d4 rounds. This is a sonic mind-affecting fear effect.

Tail attack: The hordling gains a tail attack as a secondary attack that does 1d6 points of damage on a hit.

Advanded Hordlings

In addition to increases in base attack bonus, saving throw bonus, skill points, feats, and ability score increases, a hordling gains the following increases as well.

- Increase the hordling's natural armor bonus by +2 for each additional odd-numbered Hit Die gained.
- The hordling gains an additional hordling ability for each additional even-numbered Hit Die gained.
- In addition to the standard ability score increases a hordling gets every 4 Hit Dice, it gains a +2 bonus to its Strength every even-numbered Hit Die, and a +2 bonus to its Constitution every odd-numbered Hit Die.
- A hordling's spell resistance is equal to 10 + its Hit Dice.
- A hordling with at least 12 Hit Dice gains damage reduction 10/lawful. A hordling with at least 18 Hit Dice gains damage reduction 15/lawful.
- Increase the hordling's CR by +1 for each Hit Die gained.

Sample Hordlings

These four hordlings are provided as sample advanced hordlings to use in "Chambers of Antiquities." You can recycle their base statistics as needed, changing their appearance each time you recycle them in order to preserve the strange and chaotic appearance of these fiends.

SPITTLEMAW **CR 11**

Advanced hordling
CE Medium outsider (chaotic, extraplanar, evil)
Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Spot +8, Listen +8
Languages Abyssal

AC 25, touch 12, flat-footed 23
hp 126 (12 HD); **DR** 10/lawful
Immune mind-affecting
Resist electricity 10; **SR** 22
Fort +16, **Ref** +12, **Will** +9

Spd 40 ft., swim 40 ft.
Melee 2 claws +17 (1d6+5) and Bite +12 (1d8+1)
Ranged Acid glob +14 touch (6d6 acid, once every 1d4 rounds)
Base Atk +12; **Grp** +17
Special Atk gaze attack (Fort DC 21 or stunned 1 round)

Abilities Str 20, Dex 14, Con 22, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8
SQ water breathing
Feats Ability Focus (gaze attack), Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes
Skills Climb +20, Hide +17, Jump +24, Listen +14, Move Silently +17, Spot +14, Swim +13

DREAD GNASHER **CR 13**

Advanced hordling
CE Medium outsider (chaotic, extraplanar, evil)
Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Spot +16, Listen +16
Languages Abyssal

AC 35, touch 13, flat-footed 32
hp 133 (14 HD); fast healing 5; **DR** 10/lawful
Immune mind-affecting
SR 24
Fort +14, **Ref** +14, **Will** +8

Spd 30 ft.
Melee 2 claws +20 (1d6+6) and Bite +15 (2d6+3 plus improved grab and constrict)
Ranged Electricity bolt +16 touch (7d6 electricity once every 1d4 rounds)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with claws)
Base Atk +14; **Grp** +20
Atk Options Improved grab (bite), constrict 1d6+6

Abilities Str 22, Dex 16, Con 20, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8
Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Lightning Reflexes, Mobility
Skills Climb +23, Hide +20, Jump +23, Listen +16, Move Silently +20, Spot +16

VULTUREWRETCH **CR 15**

Advanced hordling
CE Medium outsider (chaotic, extraplanar, evil)
Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Spot +18, Listen +18
Languages Abyssal

AC 32, touch 15, flat-footed 27
hp 184 (16 HD); **DR** 10/lawful
Immune mind-affecting
Resist fire 10, sonic 10; **SR** 26
Fort +19, **Ref** +17, **Will** +9

Spd 40 ft., fly 80 ft. (average)
Melee 2 wing buffets +23 (1d8+7) and Bite +18 (1d8+3)
Base Atk +16; **Grp** +18
Special Atk Breath weapon (15 ft. cone, 1/minute, Fort DC 20 or 1d6 Strength damage and nauseated for 1d6 rounds)

Abilities Str 24, Dex 21, Con 24, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8
Feats Flyby Attack, Great Fortitude, Hover, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (wing buffet), Lightning Reflexes
Skills Climb +21, Hide +24, Jump +25, Listen +18, Move Silently +24, Spot +18

SKULLREAVER **CR 17**

Advanced hordling
CE Medium outsider (chaotic, extraplanar, evil)
Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Spot +20, Listen +20
Languages Abyssal

AC 40, touch 12, flat-footed 38
hp 225 (18 HD); fast healing 5; **DR** 15/lawful
Immune mind-affecting
Resist fire 10; **SR** 28
Fort +21, **Ref** +15, **Will** +10

Spd 30 ft.
Melee 2 claws +29 (1d8+11/19–20) and Bite +27 (1d8+5) and Gore +27 (1d8+5)
Ranged Fiery ray +20 touch (9d6 fire once every 1d4 rounds)
Base Atk +18; **Grp** +29
Special Atk Gaze attack (Fort DC 21 or stunned 1 round)

Abilities Str 33, Dex 14, Con 26, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8
Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (claw), Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (claw), Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack
Skills Climb +32, Hide +23, Jump +32, Listen +20, Move Silently +23, Spot +20

Seven-Headed Juggernaut

Gargantuan Construct
Hit Dice: 45d10+60 (hp 307)
Initiative: +2
Speed: 30 ft.
Armor Class: 34 (–4 size, +2 Dex, +34 natural), touch 8, flat-footed 32
Base Attack/Grapple: +33/+56
Attack: Bite +8 melee (2d8+22/18–20/×3)
Full Attack: Bite +8 melee (2d8+22/18–20/×3)
Space/Reach: 20 ft./20 ft.
Special Attacks: Augmented critical, breath weapons, trample 2d6+22 plus 4d6 fire
Special Qualities: Construct traits, damage reduction 15/magic adamantine, darkvision 60 ft., heat, immunity to magic, low-light vision
Saves: Fort +9, Ref +9, Will +4
Abilities: Str 40, Dex 14, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1
Environment: Any
Organization: Solitary
Challenge Rating: 18
Treasure: None
Alignment: Always neutral
Advancement: 46–60 HD (Gargantuan) 60–135 HD (Colossal)
Level Adjustment: —

This massive construct of iron resembles an enormous reptile with seven great serpentine necks, each ending in a terrible reptilian head.

The seven-headed juggernaut is a horrendously potent and dangerous construct, quite possibly the only one of its kind in existence. Where the Maures found the seven-headed juggernaut, how they managed to transport it back to the Chambers of Antiquities, and how they reprogramed it to serve as a guardian there is one of the great mysteries of Maure Castle.

Combat

When active, the seven-headed juggernaut typically charges into melee, beginning combat with a trample attack. It can actually only bite with one of its heads, but the other six can generate devastating breath weapon attacks, each once per round. The seven-headed juggernaut uses these weapons against ranged foes.

Augmented Criticals (Ex): The seven-headed juggernaut's bite threatens a critical hit on a roll of 18–20 and inflicts ×3 damage on a confirmed critical hit.

Breath Weapons (Su): Six of the juggernaut's heads can employ breath weapons—each head may use its breath weapon once per round. The save DCs for all breath weapons are Constitution-based. The breath weapons have the following effects:

- Fire gout: 30-foot cone, damage 8d10 fire, Reflex DC 32 half.
- Cold beam: 40-foot line, damage 8d10 cold, Reflex DC 32 half. A creature that fails to save also takes 1d6 points of Dexterity damage as his body becomes numb.
- Poison spray: 20-foot cone, damage 1d6 Constitution and 1d6 Strength, Fortitude DC 32 negates.
- Slowing gas: 20-foot by 20-foot cube, *slowed* for 2d4 rounds, Fortitude DC 32 negates.
- Lightning cage: One creature within 60 feet must make a DC 32 Reflex save or be caught in an electrified *forcecage*. The lightning cage inflicts 2d6 electricity damage on its prisoner each round, and a like amount to anyone who touches it. The cage persists for 2d6 rounds, and can be destroyed as if it were a *wall of force*.
- Shimmering light: This 30-foot cone of light acts as an area dispel version of greater dispelling that functions at caster level 20th.

Trample (Ex): Reflex half DC 47. The save DC is Strength-based. The additional fire damage is from contact with the creature's superheated underbelly.

Heat (Su): When active, the juggernaut's underbelly glows a cherry red as it gives off tremendous heat. Any creature that attacks the juggernaut with natural weapons, unarmed strikes, or light weapons has a 50% chance of taking 4d6 fire damage from the heat.

Immunity to Magic (Ex): The seven-headed juggernaut is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance. In addition, certain spells and effects function differently against the creature, as noted below.

Cold spells that target the juggernaut deal no damage, but they do slow it and suppress its heat for a number of rounds equal to the level of the spell.

The juggernaut is affected normally by rust attacks, such as that of a rust monster or a *rusting grasp* spell.

Robert J. Kuntz was the co-DM of Gary Gygax's original GREYHAWK campaign. His credits include Deities & Demigods, Mordenkainen's Fantastic Adventure, *and* DUNGEON *#112's "Maure Castle."*

Strategicon
Strategy Game Conventions

Strategicon is proud to bring you three conventions each year, providing Southern California with a complete gaming experience!

We offer role-playing games, miniatures games, board games, collectable card games, computer games, Games Workshop tournaments and much more at the beautiful Westin Hotel Los Angeles Air Port located at 5400 West Century Blvd. Los Angeles CA 90045.

For your room reservations call 1-800-937-8461 or 310-216-5858. Please mention Strategicon Conventions Block to insure the special reduced room rate.

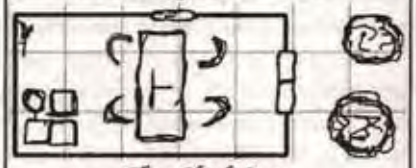
GAMEX 2005 runs on Memorial Day Weekend May 27th-30th 2005.
GATEWAY 2005 runs on Labor Day Weekend September 2nd-5th 2005.
ORCCON 2006 on President's Day Weekend February 17th-20th 2006.

Please visit our web site www.strategicon.net for future information, or call: (818) 848-4760

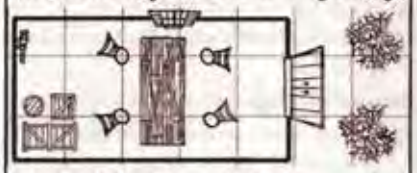
Strategicon Conventions

ISBN: 1-4137-3672-6
www.ssarend.com
The new release by S.S. Arend is available for advance purchase through Publish America now, and it will be available everywhere on April 7, 2005. Do not miss the new voice in fantasy fiction.
AVAILABLE IN TRADE PAPERBACK
PUBLISH AMERICA
www.publishamerica.com

Sick of seeing Dungeons looking like this?



Then Check Out:
DUNGEON STAMPS
The Innovative Game Enhancement for RPGS



Designed for Use with Vinyl Game Mats
GREEN DRAGON STUDIO
Available at your local game store or visit:
www.greendragonstudio.com

LOOT THE DUNGEON TREASURE TROVE!

BACK ISSUES
100'S AVAILABLE
($6 - $15)
paizo.com/dungeon

Thy Quest for Out-Of-Print Games Endeth Here.

Find those rare games and also save up to 50% on retail products! We buy, sell and trade for new and out-of-print RPG's, Miniatures and Wargames. View our online inventory of over 15,000 products at www.nobleknight.com or write for a free catalog to:
2219 Green Valley Dr., Janesville, WI 53546
Phone: 608-758-9901
Thousands of gamers can't be wrong!
Satisfaction is guaranteed!
WWW.NOBLEKNIGHT.COM

SEEKING OUT-OF-PRINT TITLES?
NEED THE NEW STUFF TOO?

D&D® 3RD EDITION
d20
AD&D® 2ND EDITION
AD&D® 1ST EDITION
BASIC D&D®

25 YEARS OF TSR... the hit pointe ALL IN ONE SPOT

http://www.hitpointe.com

Mail-order Game Shop
Specializing in Used and Out-of-Print D&D®, AD&D® and White Wolf's World of Darkness® game products.

No computer? Write for current price list:

540 North Lapeer Road, Suite 255
Orion Township, MI 48362

Discover Dragons!
Encounter rare, mysterious, & whimsical dragons in the world's only all dragon catalog!
Unique gifts & collectibles, t-shirts, prints, pewter, & limited edition artifacts.

Dancing Dragon

www.dancingdragon.com

800-322-6040 24hrs.

TRINOC*CON VI

David Studard - Gaming Guest of Honor

Charles Keegan - Art Guest of Honor

Joe R. Lansdale - Literary Guest of Honor

also featuring Margo Anderson

http://www.trinoc-con.org
visit us online for more guests!

Register Online!

July 15th-17, 2005
Durham Marriott at the Durham Civic Center
201 Foster St., Durham NC 27701
Phone: 1.919.768.6000 Fax: 1.919.768.6037

OffWorld Designs Inc.
615-785-7080
We've got the shirts gamers want to wear. See the full line of T's from artists like...
John Kovalic (Darkhorse)
Aaron Williams (Nodwick)
James O'Barr (The Crow)
Voltaire (Oh My Goth)

offworlddesigns.com

GhostOrb.com
Tabletop on the Web

GhostOrb.com is a web-based gaming community built around a customizable, virtual roleplaying game table. Play your favorite RPGs oneline with anyone, anytime, anywhere in the world without the limits of text-only communication. Run games for your friends, or join in with GhostOrb members from all around the globe. Take a seat in a professional game or perhaps get paid to run one yourself. GhostOrb is the future of old-school gaming.

Go to www.GhostOrb.com for details

ADVERTISEMENT

RPGS

"There are more things on paizo.com, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy." (*Hamlet*, Act 1, Scene 5)

The selection just keeps growing at paizo.com, your complete online source for the hottest items in gaming. With over 10,000 items from 200+ manufacturers, you're bound to find what you're looking for on our site. While you're there, stop by the store blog and check out our recommendations for all the products you never knew existed but desperately need.

From maps to miniatures, books to beasts, we've got it all at paizo.com!

The oldest RPG still reigns supreme at paizo.com, and if you're a fan of Dungeons & Dragons, you'll find everything you need at our store. From core D&D products to Forgotten Realms and Eberron, the complete D&D experience is always just a mouse-click away.

Battlefield Adventures
Publisher:
Wizards of the Coast
Game System:
Dungeons & Dragons
The essential handbook integrating war and battlefield action into D&D play, *Battlefield Adventures* provides everything you need to know to play a battle-oriented D&D campaign. Build military characters with new feats, spells, uses for traditional spells, and prestige classes. Information is given on tools specific to the battlefield, including siege engines, weapons, magic items, steeds, and other exotic mounts. Battlefield terrain aspects are discussed with plenty of illustrative maps and new rules. Specific types of battlefield encounters are discussed in detail, as well as effective battlefield design.

Forgotten Realms Champions of Ruin Hardcover
Publisher:
Wizards of the Coast
Game System:
Dungeons & Dragons
Champions of Ruin is a comprehensive guide to playing evil characters in the Forgotten Realms setting. Many aspects of play are covered: vengeance, ambition, evil vs. evil, corruption and moral failure, and loyalty/betrayal. The book also discusses types of evil—lawful, chaotic, and neutral—as well as morally ambivalent characters such as anti-heroes and rogues. Elder evils of extreme power are discussed along with tools, feats, spells, evil places and planar touchstones, and guilds and organizations that evil characters can join. Two new races are also introduced.

EBERRON

Eberron Deluxe Dungeon Masters Screen
Publisher: Wizards of the Coast
Game System: Dungeons & Dragons
Produced by popular demand, this DM screen is invaluable to Dungeon Masters running campaigns in the Eberron setting. It includes all the tables from the D&D Deluxe Dungeon Master's Screen, with modifications and additional material appropriate for game elements unique to the Eberron setting. The front showcases a beautiful widescreen-format piece of Eberron artwork. Also included is a poster map of Khorvaire, the primary setting of the Eberron campaign, with borders, trade routes, and other details not printed on any previous full-sized map.

Forgotten Realms City of Splendors: Waterdeep
Publisher:
Wizards of the Coast
Game System:
Dungeons & Dragons
For the first time in years, *City of Splendors: Waterdeep* offers an in-depth examination of the great city of Waterdeep in the Forgotten Realms setting. An overview of the city includes history, a "who's who," information on laws, and rules for running and playing in a Waterdhavian campaign. Information on the people of Waterdeep covers non-player characters, arcane schools, armed forces, guilds, nobility, prestige classes specific to the city, and more. Also included in the book are discussions of specific Waterdeep locales, adventure locales, and new monsters. An extensive appendix gives information on new equipment, magic items, psionic powers, poisons, spells, and more.

Weapons of Legacy Hardcover
Publisher:
Wizards of the Coast
Game System:
Dungeons & Dragons
The ultimate guide to magic items—especially weapons—of rich heritage. Weapons of Legacy includes many pre-defined weapons, outlining their names, history, powers, stats, necessary rituals for unlocking their secrets, and adventure hooks. How the weapons can gain power is discussed, as well as the feats with which they might be used. Also included are discussions of other magic items such as magic armor, rings, and staves.

Eberron Explorers Handbook Hardcover
Publisher:
Wizards of the Coast
Game System:
Dungeons & Dragons
The ultimate sourcebook for players wishing to explore the world of Eberron, the *Explorer's Handbook* showcases the multi-continental aspect of the Eberron setting. The chapter on travel discusses instantaneous and played-out travel, and it provides deck plans for airships, the lightning rail, and galleons, plus other methods of conveyance. A chapter on Explorer's Essentials offers information on travel papers, preassembled equipment kits, how to join the Wayfarers' Foundation, and more. This handbook will encourage you to explore the entire world rather than remain fixed in one region.

Dungeon Masters Guide II Hardcover
Publisher:
Wizards of the Coast
Game System:
Dungeons & Dragons
A follow-up to the Dungeon Master's Guide, designed to aid Dungeon Masters and reduce game preparation time. Chapters include discussion on running a game, designing adventures, building and using prestige classes, and creating campaign settings. Ready-made game elements include instant traps, pre-generated locations, treasures, and a fully realized and rendered town.

Book of Roguish Luck
Publisher:
White Wolf Publishing
Game System: d20
Smarter, stealthier, trickier: a silent footstep; the turn of a card; the silent kill; the glitter of a knife in the dark. These are the tools of adventurers who live by their wits, deep in the shadows. But even the most skilled rogues adore and worship Lady Luck, who holds the difference between success and failure. The *Book of Roguish Luck* offers the new Luck rules subsystem for all classes, plus the bandit, gutter mage, and shadow thief core classes, as well as four prestige classes. In addition, it presents expanded guild rules, a new school of rogue spells, shadow magic, more than 30 new feats, and expanded sneak attack rules. Now you can create Thieves' Guilds with complete stats, types, and initiation rituals, as well as simplify fencing goods, picking locks, and raising hell. The *Book of Roguish Luck* also features guidelines for using this material with Monte Cook's Arcana Evolved.

The Secret of Zir'An
Publisher: White Wolf Publishing
Game System: Finesse
The Secret of Zir'An is a fully developed fantasy roleplaying game using Paragon's proprietary Finesse System. If you were to consider your typical sword-&-sorcery fantasy world as representative of a planet's medieval period, *The Secret of Zir'An* turns the clock forward to imagine what the same world's post-industrial period would look like. Magic and technology are integrated—they've developed alongside each other and grown together in an organic fashion. After much turmoil, including world wars and divine interventions, Zir'An is a vast place full of secrets ready to be discovered by those in the eye of Fate.

CHECK OUT OUR PRICES AT PAIZO.COM

Mind's Eye Theatre: The Requiem

Publisher: White Wolf Publishing
Game System: Mind's Eye Theater

The Requiem provides all the information necessary to bring the mysterious existence of vampires to your Mind's Eye Theatre™ game. Secret histories of the undead, the clans and covenants that make up the danse macabre, rules for the mystic Disciplines—it's all here. Discover the nocturnal world as you've never seen it before. Requires the Mind's Eye Theatre rulebook for play. Trade-sized and hardcover.

Eden Studios Presents Volume 3

Publisher: Eden Studios
Game System: Unisystem

Your Guide to the Unisystem: Volume 3—third time's a charm! This volume features: background on the Shadefont, crossover rules furthering your Essence-based magic in a cinematic world, a short scenario for cat lovers, a brand new setting for use with any Unisystem core book, and more! More spells from the Buffy TV show! More Totem Warriors to liven up your Buffy and Angel games! Four archetypes for your AFMBE survival horror sessions! Does it get any better than this?

A Game of Thrones Limited Edition RPG

Publisher: Guardians of Order
Game System: d20 and Tri-Stat

For the most dedicated fans of George R. R. Martin's masterpiece of fantasy literature, A Song of Ice and Fire, only the best will do—and this Deluxe Limited Edition doesn't hold back! This full-color book details the first novel in the series, A Game of Thrones, presenting a wealth of resource and reference material about the dynamic and mysterious lands of the Seven Kingdoms. Additionally, roleplaying game rules for engaging the characters and plots of Westeros are included for both the d20 and Tri-Stat Systems. The book features full-color printing on premium quality paper, dozens of gorgeous images, a foil-stamped leatherette hardbound cover, an exquisite dust jacket, and a cloth bookmark. An essential companion book for the serious Martin fan and role-playing game connoisseur. Supplies are limited.

Ex Machina: d20 Cyberpunk Genre

Publisher: Guardians of Order
Game System: d20

Introducing the ultimate cyberpunk genre and setting book—now for the d20 system! In addition to an extensive treatment of cyberpunk roleplaying rules and options, this hardcover book features four dynamic and distinct settings that range from the grim-and-gritty far future to a dystopian world 90 minutes from now. An excellent resource for players; an essential guide for Game Masters.

Iron Kingdoms Full Metal Fantasy Monsternomicon Denizens (d20)

Publisher: Privateer Press
Game System: d20

Updated for d20 v.3.5, the award-winning *Monsternomicon* is a different kind of monster book with detailed, multiple-page entries on each monster, its lore, its treasure, and engaging adventure hooks. The *Monsternomicon* is suitable for use in any d20 System fantasy setting, but is specially made for fans of the Iron Kingdoms.

Starship Troopers RPG Hardcover

Publisher: Mongoose Publishing
Game System: Open Gaming License

Bringing alive Robert Heinlein's classic novel and the movies and television series that have followed, the *Starship Troopers RPG* gives players the opportunity to experience the Bug War firsthand. Players can follow in the footsteps of Jonny Rico and his Mobile Infantry troopers as they face the menace of the Arachnids. This 256-page rulebook provides everything that players and Game Masters need for immersing themselves in Heinlein's gripping vision of the future. Written by industry veteran August Hahn, the *Starship Troopers RPG* promises to be the standout roleplaying game of science fiction warfare.

Saga of the Drow: The Dying Light HC

Publisher: Mongoose Publishing
Game System: d20

The Saga Of The Drow Trilogy from Mongoose Publishing is a compelling new campaign starring one of the most evil and yet enduring fantasy races—the nefarious dark elves. Not for over a generation has the terror and fascination of gaming's most iconic antagonists been so accessible to the GM's epic campaign arsenal. The second of the Saga of the Drow trilogy, *The Dying Light* is a 256-page book packed full of information on these most evil of creatures and includes an exciting campaign designed to take player characters from 11th to 20th level. It can be used either as a standalone book or as part of the wider trilogy and is a complete campaign—no GM work required.

Combat Missions

Publisher: Paradigm Concepts
Game System: d20

Combat Missions is a new supplement for AEG's award-winning Spycraft espionage game. Designed to exploit the latest Spycraft rules to their full potential, *Combat Missions* presents scenarios where the sleuthing and puzzle solving of normal espionage are not the focus. Agents find themselves the last line of defense as anarchy reins and laws stop working. The overarching plot of *Combat Missions* is a direct result of the frightening new world of the 21st century. Corporate greed and corruption are exposed, terrorism is a very real threat, the Government has lost control, and order must be restored—that's where the agents come in. Part of a series of products from Paradigm Concepts covering all aspects of the Game Controller's life, including detailed combat maps, floor plans and many villainous NPCs from Spycraft: Most Wanted.

Warhammer Fantasy RPG

Publisher: Sabertooth
Game System: Warhammer

The classic roleplaying game is back in a brand new edition! Explore the grim fantasy world of Warhammer firsthand with the awesome new edition of the classic roleplaying game. The core rulebook contains all you need to play—sections on character generation, careers, combat, magic (both divine and sorcerous), and religion, as well as extensive background information on the dark world of Warhammer, full details on how to run a game, and a complete introductory adventure. The WFRPG rulebook also includes brand new character sheets and maps for use in play.

Castles & Crusades: Shadows of the Halfling Hall

Publisher: Troll Lord Games
Game System: Castles & Crusades

It was common knowledge throughout Hobbston that Willic Brambletoe gave the best feasts and threw the most memorable events, but of late some tragedy has beset Brambletoe, his hall, and the whole of Hobbyton. Foul play or murder, none know, but in Brambletoe's Hall the Mayor, the sheriff, and a host of good men were last seen. A shadow hung over the hall from that day forward, and all those who went in failed to return. Weirdlings haunt the late hours of the night, stalking the street of Hobbston intent on devilry, and the people of Hobbston are calling for aid. A Castles & Crusades Adventure Module for 4-6 characters of levels 1-3.

Vampire The Requiem: Ghouls

Publisher: White Wolf Publishing
Game System: Storytelling System

Slaves to the addictive taste of vampiric Vitae, ghouls trade servitude for that heady substance. Servitude, however, damns them far more than they know, as their unnatural craving drives them to ever greater desperation and depravity. From in-depth rules on being a ghoul, to ghoul families and systems for creating them, to Vitae-fed plants known as mandragora, *Ghouls* examines the life and lot of those who serve vampiric masters and fully explores the effects of the Blood on mortal lives.

CHECK OUT OUR PRICES AT PAIZO.COM

MINIATURES

Magnificent Egos

Gross Anatomy
Publisher: Magnificent Egos

Asherake
Publisher:
Magnificent Egos

Chromithian
Publisher:
Magnificent Egos

Bard
Publisher:
Magnificent Egos

Deep Mother
Publisher:
Magnificent Egos

Privateer Press

Cryx Satyxis Raiders Unit Box
Publisher: Privateer Press

Cryx Revenant Pirate Crew Unit Box
Publisher: Privateer Press

Khador Berserker Heavy Warjack
Publisher: Privateer Press

Iron Kingdoms

Full Metal Fantasy Cygnar City Guard
Publisher: Privateer Press

Full Metal Fantasy 'Gul'
Gobber Rogue
Publisher: Privateer Press

Full Metal Fantasy Daniera
Madise Cleric of Marrow
Publisher: Privateer Press

Reaper

Leprechauns (3)
Publisher:
Reaper Miniatures

Vulthus Oathcroak
Publisher:
Reaper Miniatures

Grave Horror
Publisher:
Reaper Miniatures

Railor, Forgotten
Soul
Publisher:
Reaper Miniatures

Moandain
the Lich
Publisher:
Reaper Miniatures

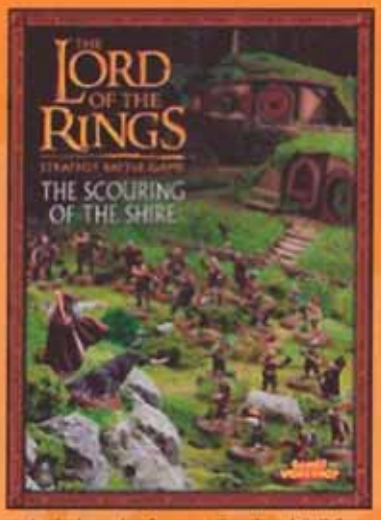
CHECK OUT OUR PRICES AT PAIZO.COM

Elven Throne
Publisher: Mega Miniatures

Woman In Stocks
Publisher:
Mega Miniatures

Candles and Brazier Statues
Publisher: Mega Miniatures

Lord of the Rings TMG Sauron
Publisher: Sabertooth



Lord of the Rings Scouring of the Shire Box
Publisher: Games Workshop

Lord of the Rings Scouring of the Shire Book
Publisher: Games Workshop
The *Scouring of the Shire* supplement is an invaluable guide to collecting, painting and gaming with Games Workshop's detailed The Lord of the Rings miniatures. Within its colorfully illustrated pages you will find essential rules information and inspiration to bring the battles of Middle-earth to your own tabletop.

Includes rules for new Good and Evil forces such as Hobbit Warriors and Heroes, Sharkey and his band of Ruffians, and Golfimbul and the dreaded White Warg. A linked campaign of six scenarios tells the story of Sharkey's occupation of the Shire and the desperate plight of the Hobbits, from the first Ruffians sneaking through the Shire's bounds to the greatest battle ever fought in the Shire. An appendix details some of the more memorable events in the Shire's history through six additional scenarios, such as the Battle of Greenfields and the Fell Winter. Detailed advice is given on creating the colorful scenery of the Shire, from Hobbit-holes to traps and snares, as well as painting guides for Hobbits, Sharkey's Ruffians, and Warg Riders.

The Lord of the Rings: Strategy Battle Game is required to play.

Mage Knight: Omens
Publisher: Wizkids Inc.
Booster Pack: 4 miniatures, 1 domain, spell book, spell, relic, or adventuring company, and 1 rules insert
The Shyft have returned! Their long hibernation over, the Shyft have returned in their true, deadly forms, leading an army of Mage Spawn into battle. The Land's only hope are the champions—warriors whose mettle has been tested in scores of campaigns—banding together with powerful, multi-factional adventure companies. Many favorite characters return, including Rayden Marz, Oracle Kastali and Podo (with his magic shield!).

New and improved Shyft warriors introduce a new sub-faction, the Darkmarch. Adventuring companies are a new card element providing common abilities to all the warriors in a player's army. Champions are single figures with multiple, swappable combat dials, each representing a different version of the warrior. All of these allow players more power than ever before to customize their armies and field the warriors of their choice!

All miniatures come fully painted and assembled.

MechWarrior Firepower Booster Pack
Publisher: Wizkids Inc.
Booster Pack: 4 miniatures (1 'Mech, 1 vehicle, 2 infantry), gear card, pilot card, and random card
MechWarrior: Firepower brings more offensive might to every MechWarrior game! Aggressive House Kurita attacks the Inner Sphere in their stylized, samurai-like 'Mechs, while new Assault 'Mechs and Quads round out existing factions and House Davion and House Steiner arrive in full force! Mission cards add a new twist to the game, introducing extra victory conditions.

MechWarrior: Firepower introduces 83 new warriors, 6 of which are super-rare, and 1 ultra-rare 'Mech—a preview of the next new faction in the MechWarrior universe! The expansion also adds 25 gear cards, 25 pilot cards, 8 planetary condition cards, 8 mission cards, and 8 faction pride cards. All miniatures come fully painted and assembled.

CHECK OUT OUR PRICES AT PAIZO.COM

ADVERTISEMENT

BOARD GAMES

Monsters Menace America
Publisher: Avalon Hill
Giant monsters are invading! As a giant monster, stomping cities is what you do— but now other giant monsters are moving in on your turf, and you have to put a stop to that. Through a bizarre twist of fate, a branch of the military has fallen under your control, ready to attack the other monsters. While your rivals are busy trampling tanks and swatting fighter jets, you'll be out there growing in power and infamy, getting ready for the Monster Challenge.

Strengthen your monster by mutating, gaining health, and earning Infamy tokens. Weaken the other monsters by attacking them with your military units and interfering with their monstrous plans. In the end, when the dust settles and the radiation fades, the last creature standing will be crowned King of the Giant Monsters!

Call of Cthulhu Arkham Horror Board Game
Publisher: Fantasy Flight Games
The town of Arkham, Massachusetts is in a panic. Horrific and bizarre events have begun to occur with increasing frequency—all seeming to point toward some cataclysmic event in the near future that may spell disaster for everyone. Only one small band of investigators can save Arkham from the Great Old Ones and destruction! *Arkham Horror* was originally published by Chaosium, Inc. almost two decades ago, and this new, updated edition features stunning new artwork and graphical design, as well as revised and expanded rules from the game's original creator, Richard Launius. No fan of the Cthulhu mythos will want to miss the opportunity to acquire this classic Call of Cthulhu boardgame!

Lord of the Rings Confrontation Deluxe Edition
Publisher: Fantasy Flight Games
Take control of the armies of Sauron seeking to recover their master's ring, or join the forces of the free peoples of Middle Earth in their quest to destroy the One Ring in the fires of Mount Doom! This deluxe edition of *Lord of the Rings: The Confrontation* gives the 2-player board game an expanded game board, larger sculpted plastic stands, completely new artwork and graphic design, 28 entirely new characters to complement the classic characters, plus four new Special Power cards, making this deluxe edition a whole new game!

SPANC
Publisher: Steve Jackson Games
SPANC Them All! Life is good when you're a Space Pirate Amazon Ninja Catgirl. Enjoy a life of larceny and mayhem as you embark on one Caper after another. Defeat every challenge the galaxy throws at you, from the Friendly Guard Puppies all the way to the Fiendish Death Trap. Pick up Toys (and the occasional Poolboy), grab more Fame than anyone else, and watch your tail ... because the other catgirls want what you've got! Lovingly illustrated by Phil Foglio. Comes with 108 full-color oversized cards, counters, rulesheet, and dice in a 6" x 9" box.

Runebound Expansion II: Isle of Dread
Publisher: Fantasy Flight Games
Explore the uncharted islands of the world of Runebound and piece together the lost map to the fabled Island of Dread! By sea or land, adventure awaits all brave heroes, whether they swing swords or cast spells.

Isle of Dread features a gorgeous new board overlay that creates a completely new game environment. The expansion set also features 126 new cards, including new characters, encounters, challenges, events and equipment, as well as new rules for ships that characters can hire to transport them among the scattered islands in their quest to find the *Island of Dread* and win the game. Not all ships are created equal, however, and you get what you pay for: The Vulgar Princess and her crew might come cheap, but they might also seize all your loot and dump you overboard.

Requires the Runebound basic game.

Reiner Knizia's Through the Desert
Publisher: Fantasy Flight Games
From the award-winning game designer Reiner Knizia comes a game of strategy, patience, and cool plastic camels! The desert is still treacherous, mysterious, and without mercy, but for those willing to risk the dangers of the shifting, sun-baked sands, it holds riches beyond compare. In *Through the Desert*, two to five players each control a tribe of nomads vying for control of the desert. By establishing caravans and taking over oases, the players gain points as their tribes increase in power. Strategy is essential in deciding how and where to build your tribe's caravans. There is more than one way to gain points, and several ways to win. Should you try to build the longest caravan? Or should you dominate the desert's oases? Don't forget to keep an eye on your opponents' caravans, or you may find your own tribe cut off from valuable water holes. *Through the Desert* is playable by ages 10 and up, and is suitable for the whole family.

Blue Moon Pillar Expansion
Publisher: Fantasy Flight Games
The mysterious Pillar are willful loners, rarely talking about their experiences during their long voyages. Their many boosters, like caterpillars and powerful magic potions, help them defeat their foes! The 31 different cards of this people set can be played against any people of the Blue Moon base game or any other people of the fantastic world of Blue Moon. Rules are not included and can be found in the Blue Moon base game.

Blue Moon Allies: Emissaries & Inquisitors
Publisher: Fantasy Flight Games
The Legend goes on! Following the calls of the Royal Heirs, emissaries from foreign cultures arrive with support and involve themselves in the conflict. Their embittered enemies, Princess Elinor and Prince Roland, intervene more directly in the activities and send their most trusted Inquisitors to aid and urge the leaders of the peoples towards victory. *Emissaries & Inquisitors* is the latest expansion for Reiner Knizia's hit, non-collectible card game, Blue Moon. The set contains 30 new cards that enhance the existing people sets and introduce new deckbuilding opportunities.

Shadows Over Camelot
Publisher: Days of Wonder
As the incarnation of the Knights of the Round Table, players work together to defeat the forces closing in on Camelot. But beware: players must be vigilant for a traitor in their midst who is biding his time, secretly sowing the seeds of havoc and destruction.

Kitty Chaos
Publisher: Playroom Entertainment
The "Cat"-astophic game of quick escapes! Run kitty run! In *Kitty Chaos*, four kittens have made a daring escape from the clutches of the evil City Pound, which snatches the felines from their owners and sells them to the fatal fur trade. Now they must make their way back through the suburban streets to their loving owners. Unfortunately, their trek is troubled with danger—from vicious dogs to malicious kids, these furry felines have a chaotic adventure in front of them, and the pound van doesn't give up its chase along the way. Your job is to get your kitty back to its correct owner. Luckily, you have nine lives to help you get there—so be the first player to reach your owner's home and win the game! For 2-4 Players, ages 10 to Adult.

CHECK OUT OUR PRICES AT PAIZO.COM

ADVERTISEMENT

toyVault

Cthulhu Slippers

Monty Python Mini
Bloody Rabbit Plush

KoDT
Brian Plush

Monty Python Black
Knight Plush

Godzilla 50th
Anniversary
Plush

Monty Python Holy Hand Grenade
of Antioch Plush

Plush 6 Sided Die

Plush 20 Sided Die

Plush Gigantic
Tube of Dice

Battra
Plush

Eye Tyrant Plush

Secret Agent Cthulhu Plush

Blue Dragon Plush

CHECK OUT OUR PRICES AT PAIZO.COM

COMICS

So your friends couldn't make it to the gaming session, and now you're wondering what to do with that empty evening. Should you balance your checkbook? Walk the dog? Of course not! Just because you're alone doesn't mean you can't still escape into a world of fun and fantasy! At paizo.com, we've got a vast selection of gaming-related comics—perfect for keeping you satisfied on those cold, game-less nights.

1d6 Degrees of Separation—Collected Dork Tower V6

Publisher: Dork Storm Press

Huzzah! It's the first major collection of Dork Tower comic books in more than a year! Compiling Dork Tower issues 19-24, this is a perfect collection for newcomers to Dork Tower and die-hard fans alike! With Matt and Kayleigh split up, each issue focuses on a different Dork Tower character. Includes the infamous Igor Bar recipe, as well as the Gamer's Celebrity cookbook! By John Kovalic.

Obligatory Dragon on the Cover—Nodwick Chronicles IV

Publisher: Dork Storm Press

A Henchman Collection of Nodwick 19-24. This fourth tome in the Nodwick saga starts with the birth of a new swear word and pretty much goes downhill from there. In these pages you'll find the power of profanity, the perils of omniscience, the rescue of a fair maiden, ear-splitting Broadway musical numbers, a parody of the biggest fantasy movie trilogy ever, and a fish story that'll make you wish you owned a horned helmet! Nodwick is the critically-acclaimed fantasy-humor comic book that presents the adventures of the world's favorite henchman as he toils for a somewhat inept (but well-meaning) band of adventurers. By Aaron Williams.

PS238 With Liberty & Recess For All

Publisher: Dork Storm Press

A Collection of the ps238 Comic Book, Volume 1: Issues #0 Through #5. Welcome to the first public school for metaprodigy children—with great power comes great potential for property damage! Founded with the future in mind, ps238 is a unique learning institution specially designed to educate the next generation of metahumans. Students attend classes aboveground with their normal peers, as well as travel three miles underground to a facility that helps them learn how to use their "unique gifts" effectively and in a safe environment. While their parents do battle with the forces of evil, ps238's students face the perils of offworld field trips, the fear of flying, class elections, and even (gasp!) gym class! So grab your lead-lined lunchbox and an extra set of spandex, because you won't want to miss a day of school. See what critics and comic-book fans everywhere have been raving about! Class is in session! By Aaron Williams.

Dr Blink Superhero Shrink #1

Publisher: Dork Storm Press

What happens when you're a suicidal superhero, but you can't kill yourself because you're invulnerable? And will the Justice Society of America League of Justice Society ever settle on a name? The hilarious bimonthly misadventures of the world's leading authority on metahuman mental health begin NOW! Who watches the watchmen's psychoses? It's Dr. Blink, psychologist to the superheroes, of course! By John Kovalic and Christopher Jones.

Lethargic Lad Annual #2

Publisher: Dork Storm Press

Reprinting over a year's worth of comics from lethargiclad.com! See those funny characters you've grown to know and tolerate! See "Evil Twin" Smiley Face Guys! See the saga of Dark Green Boy! See a team-up spook-tacular with The Grad! By Greg Hyland.

Vampire The Masquerade: Nightmares in Our Midst Graphic Novel

Publisher: Moonstone

This book is the perfect primer for White Wolf's World of Darkness noir universe, as well as offering plenty of cool reading for the experienced White Wolf enthusiast! This bound volume includes the critically acclaimed: "Vampire the Masquerade: Toreador," "Werewolf the Apocalypse: Black Furies," and "Vampire the Masquerade: Theo Bell." 152pgs, color, square-bound.

In the Pit #1

Publisher: Eden Studios

A humorous look from Eden Studios at the world of the gaming fan boy.

Hackmasters of Everknight: Ultimate Hackmasters

Publisher: Kenzer and Company

The fate of the kingdom lies with the Heroes of Hack ... get out while you still can! But before you go, pick up this special trade paperback collection of HackMasters of Everknight issues #1-5—now that the new Everknights series has begun, it's the perfect opportunity to catch up on the chaos and see how the Heroes of Hack got their start! This new, handy and long-lasting format makes the perfect addition to any fan's bookshelf.

Hackcentennial – Knights of the Dinner Table #100

Publisher: Kenzer and Company

Celebrate this magnificent milestone with a special double-sized issue! Double the number of KoDT strips! Double the action! Double the fun! Yes, now more than ever, Knights of the Dinner Table remains the longest running comic on the subject of games and gamers! Come join B.A., Brian, Bob, Dave, Sara and the KenzerCo crew for this incredible centennial issue!

ORIGINS

International Game Expo

Tempt the Balance of Power

Tournaments, Special Events, and Casual Play featuring Dungeons & Dragons and dozens of other role playing systems

Seminars and Open Gaming

Demos and New Releases

June 30-July 3, 2005 * Columbus, Ohio

Visit us at www.originsgames.com

www.offworlddesigns.com provided the image

GAMA

WIZKIDS

MANAGING THE FLOW OF INFORMATION

PLOTTING THE CAMPAIGN (PART 4)

BY MONTE COOK
BY KYLE HUNTER

You've developed a great campaign. The setting is full of intrigue, secrets, wonder, magic, and fascinating NPCs. The course of the campaign is all planned out, with adventures, revelations, surprises and interesting twists and turns. You're very happy with it all.

But as you gaze over your notes and plans you begin to wonder: how do you get all this info into the hands (and more importantly, the minds) of the players? How much do you give them at once?

YOU ARE THE PLAYERS' EYES AND EARS

You've probably heard it said before—your job as DM is to provide the players with what they see and hear. Normally, people think about this in terms of describing a dungeon room or forest glade. But it's more than that. The DM is the conduit of all information that flows from the campaign world to the players.

The players can't know anything unless you tell them. And in that same vein, if you give the players some bit of knowledge, they know it—you can't take it back. That means that managing the flow of information, providing enough but never too much, is one of the most important jobs a DM has. Arguably, good information management can make all the difference between a great campaign and a mediocre one. And it can certainly prevent a disastrous one.

HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?

First and foremost, remember that your players are never going to be able to react to your world like real people if you haven't made it a real place for them. Provide them with vivid descriptions of places and things, particularly at the beginning of the campaign, to set a picture in their mind.

Besides just the basic details of their surroundings (both immediate and beyond), players need you to convey to them what's going on in a manner that gives them something to act upon. If the PCs wander about town and then sunset comes and everyone is attacked by vampires, that's an interesting surprise—but don't expect the players to be ready for it. However, if you tell them that the townsfolk seem skittish and pale, and that their wariness grows more severe as time passes (and night approaches), that's something the players can absorb and act upon. And when they try to question someone and that person runs off, revealing bite marks on their neck, suddenly the PCs have a chance to figure out what's going on.

In other words, you can have the greatest plot for an adventure in the world, but if it's all going on behind the scenes, the PCs are never going to understand or appreciate what's happening. Unless things are incredibly straightforward—the adventure deals with clearing out a cave of bugbears, and that's really all there is to it—you need to figure out how to feed the players the details they need to figure things out, at least by the end.

In a complex game, this usually involves giving them details, or just fragments of details, one at a time. Say that ultimately you want your campaign to be about the nefarious plot of a lich to rise out of his tomb and lay waste to the kingdom. You determine that a given NPC that the PCs will eventually meet knows a few basic facts regarding this, but nothing else. Another NPC that they'll encounter later knows a few other things. A few more details can be found in an old book in a ruined tower. And so on. The information you dole out becomes a map of the campaign. Even if the PCs' goal isn't to find these nuggets of information, you still plant them in their way as they go

on their adventures so that eventually they discover the ultimate secrets that will lead them to the end of the campaign, and suddenly everything that's come before all ties together. The clues might not even seem to be connected at first. They might not get the information "in order." For example, they might learn of an ancient ritual that can lay waste to a kingdom. Later, they learn that the old lich still stirs in his tomb. Later still, they learn that the lich swore to use the ritual. Only at the end do they learn where the tomb is. Or maybe they learn where the tomb is first, and discover the details of the ritual last... it's really up to you.

As you dole out bits of knowledge, the PCs must assemble them together and make sense out of them. Remember that most players are not TV detectives or master sleuths. Figuring out puzzles and mysteries is hard. Err on the side of giving it all away. It's better for the PCs to figure things out too soon (and feel smart) than for them to take forever, getting frustrated and probably even bored.

HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?

There are two cases when you can give the PCs too much information. The first is the counter of the previous point. If you give away the solution to the mystery too easily, the PCs can get bored from the lack of challenge, or even frustrated that you're not giving them a chance to figure it out for themselves. If the scenario is a murder mystery and the PCs spot the chamberlain slouching away from the scene with a bloody dagger, that's probably too much information (unless of course it's a red herring). A lot of this has to do with timing. The chamberlain's bloody dagger might be the perfect clue for the PCs to see, but not right away. First, give them a reason to suspect the chamberlain. Then, after much investigation, they finally convince a young scullery maid to tell them that *she* saw the chamberlain with his blood-covered dagger right after the murder.

The second case where you can give too much information is simply called information overload. If you suddenly give your players the low-down on the politics and last five hundred years of history of the kingdom they've just ridden into, with the names of the last sixteen generations of kings, all the wars they've engaged in, and every significant event that's occurred since events were recorded there, and only then begin explaining how this relates to the adventure at hand, they're not going to remember much of it. It's too much, and it's all at once. Even if you've taken the time to detail the royal genealogy, is it ever going to be important for the players to know any of it?

There are only two kinds of information to ever provide to players:

1. Details that add to the picture they have in their minds while they sit around the table. (This isn't limited to sensory information—sometimes stories full of flavor or setting details that convey a mood or an idea go as far or farther to establish the fantasy realm in the players' mind than simple visual descriptions.)

2. Details that help them figure out what's going on. This might be as straightforward as, "there are three orcs charging with axes." It can also be slowly doled out clues as to who the orcs are really working for, and why. Basically, it's anything that has to do with the actual adventure, whether regarding the immediate encounter or the long-term plot.

Anything that doesn't fall into one of these two categories is needless informational clutter. Rarely—very rarely—"clutter" can be good to throw the players off the trail in a mystery scenario, but you have to make sure that they're not thrown off for good. Confusing the PCs is only a good idea once in a great while.

CONVEYING INFORMATION

It's worth considering how to convey important information to the PCs. There are four main methods for the DM to impart knowledge to the players.

1. **DM Exposition:** This normally comes at the beginning of the campaign, when the DM spends a great deal of time giving the basic overview of the setting and the set-up situation so that the game can start and the players have a sense of place and time. Good DMs often write up the basic details of the setting and the campaign for the players to read ahead of time (which we will discuss in depth in an upcoming issue). This is where the DM says, "Halflings come from this region and hate the goblins that live in the nearby hills, but trade with the humans in the nearby city state, ruled by a queen of incredible beauty and extremely unnatural age..."

   This doesn't always have to come just at the beginning of the campaign, however. There's no severed tie between the DM and the players once the campaign starts. For example, if the players hear the name of an ancient dwarven citadel mentioned, it's perfectly fine for the DM to turn to the player of the dwarf character and tell him directly information

Show Don't Tell... Well, Go Ahead and Tell Too

A maxim regarding all types of creative writing is "show don't tell." Show that people are afraid of the strange rumblings and smoke coming from the mountain, don't just tell us that they are afraid. This is true in RPGs as well. It's far more interesting for the PCs to interact with terrified commonfolk and then see the smoke rising from the volcano for themselves rather than just hear "the volcano's about to erupt, what do you do?" from the DM.

It's more interesting for players to discover things than to be told things. Boxed text at the beginning of a published adventure that provides the background and "hook" may be a necessary evil, but it is indeed an evil. If the players see the devastation that the marauding giants have wrought for themselves, and talk with the local folk who saw it all happen, that's much better than giving them some exposition about the king calling the PCs together and sending them off to hunt giants.

However, don't be afraid to show and tell when you're the DM. If the PCs aren't picking up on your subtle clues (the "show"), you might just have to tell them. As the PCs' eyes and ears, it's your responsibility to make sure they really know what's going on. If they don't know, it's probably your fault.

that he knows about the place, learned just by growing up dwarf.

You should even feel free to bend, break or ignore the rules to provide such information. Say the PCs enter a wooden palisade made of an interesting type of wood that is particularly resistant to fire. Even though one might make a Knowledge (nature) check to identify the wood as such, the DM could also just turn to the player with an elf character, or one playing a ranger or druid, and tell him that the woods he grew up in had a great deal of this kind of wood and then explain its properties.

This is a tricky issue, however. On the one hand, you don't want to slow down the game asking if anyone's got Knowledge (nature) just for some simple fact that might not even be important. Plus, the player running an elf or ranger will feel validated that the flavor behind their choice of race or class isn't being ignored. On the other hand, a character that spent his skill points in Knowledge (nature) will feel rewarded for doing so if you call for the check. The best solution is to achieve a happy medium, usually reserving the checks for issues of import, or player-initiated concerns. Player: "What kind of wood is that?" DM: "Make a check."

2. **NPC Interaction:** Overall, this may be the most interesting and rewarding way to provide the players with information. Talking with NPCs, whether it be a friendly conversation, an interrogation, or a *speak with dead* spell provides the DM with so much opportunity for development. Now, this isn't you talking, it's the NPC. NPCs can lie. They can be incorrect. They can be biased, or have a skewed perspective. Their information might be spotty. This makes handing out knowledge very interesting for both you and the players. Always give the PCs, at some point, some insight into the NPC they're talking with, so they know if they can be trusted. Don't ever make it seem like an NPC is speaking with the voice of the DM. That's metagaming and throws off player expectations for future NPC interactions.

3. **Clues:** A found map in a treasure hoard. A message on the body of a defeated foe. These are heavy-handed but sometimes interesting ways to dole out secrets. A secret in an ancient tome feels like something no one else knows, for example, giving it a quality the words of an NPC cannot have. When possible, if the PCs find an old map, or a scribbled note, draw an old map or write out a scribbled note for them ahead of time, and hand it to them during the game. These "props" are easy to make, but add a lot of flair to a session.

4. **Research/Gather Information/Spells/etc.:** Sometimes information is learned through use of the game's mechanics. There's nothing wrong with that, but it is perhaps the least dynamic way of handling it. The real advantage it has is that it's usually player-initiated. You don't tell the PCs to cast *commune*. They decide that. That's also, of course, its biggest drawback—you have to be able to think on your feet when this happens. It's best if you know what kinds of things—from Gather Information or Knowledge skills to divination spells—your players can do and try to be ready. If you know, for example, that the players are going to be hanging around town for a week while the wizard scribes scrolls, you can expect that the rogue will be tavern-hopping and using his Gather Information skill in which he's devoted a lot of ranks. If you know the PCs are going to find themselves in a real quandary at a certain point, be ready for the PCs to cast *commune* or *legend lore* if you know they can.

PLAYER MEMORY

There is perhaps no greater reward in being a DM than when you mention the name of an ancient civilization during a session and one of the players pipes up with his knowledge of those people and the powerful artifacts they left behind hidden in ruins along the coast, which is haunted by ghouls and harried by tribes of hobgoblins. Suddenly, it's not all made up silliness but a quasi-real place that the players can talk about like it has real substance. In other words, the players remember some of the details they've learned in previous sessions and apply it to something going on right now (like real people do in the real world every day).

Still, just as often, perhaps even more often (depending on your group, and how well you've done your job), you mention the name of the ancient civilization whose ruins occupy that dangerous coastal region of your campaign world and the players reward you with blank stares. They don't remember that it's come up before, or at best they remember the name but none of the details.

Don't be too discouraged. Remember that you play for a few hours once a week, and the players all have real lives that take up the remaining 6 days and 20 hours of that week, filled with all sorts of details they have to remember, movies and TV shows they watch, books they read, and so on. We're bombarded by details all the time. Always remember that even though it all happened just last month to the characters, that game session might have been six months ago in the real world, and time erodes memory.

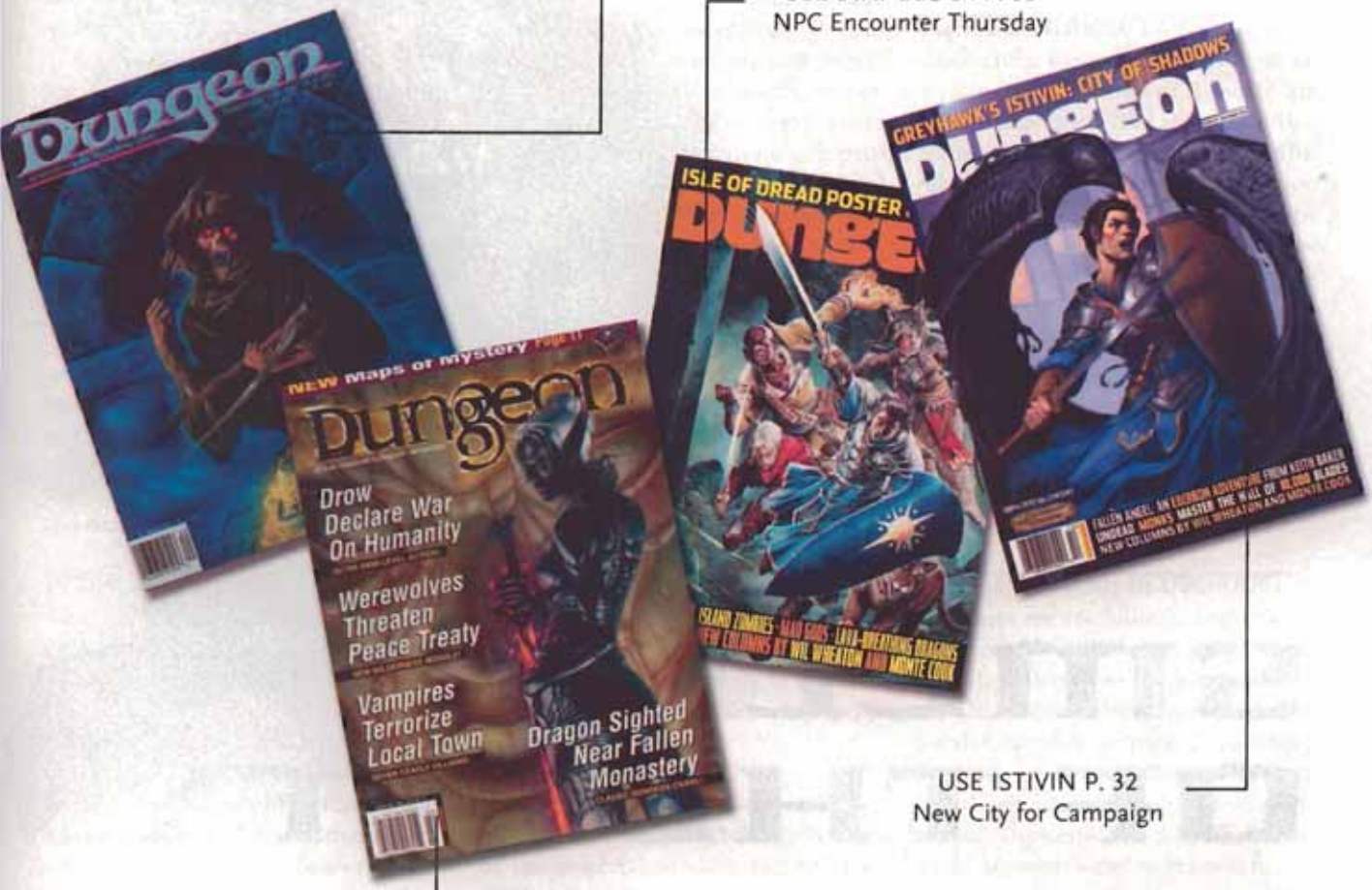
In the end, don't get mad when your players don't remember every little detail you provide about the game world, even if you do. No matter how hard you try—except in the rarest of exceptional circumstances—you're always going to be more invested in your creation than someone else. Assume that their memories need a little jogging now and again, or even every time. Then you'll be pleasantly rewarded when they do remember. And whatever you do, reward the player who does remember something about the campaign. Tell them, in front of the entire group, how smart they are for remembering and how cool you think it is. Maybe even give them a small experience point reward if you like. Nothing encourages like encouragement.

Next Time: Tying together the ideas in this issue as well as some in those previous, next time I'll present a fully fleshed-out example of a campaign outline, with specific ideas of how to manage the information presented within it.

Monte Cook is the author of the Dungeon Master's Guide. *Check out his publishing company, Malhavoc Press, at montecook.com.*

USE DUNGEON MAP P. 45
Sunday Game at Bill's

USE STAT BLOCK P. 88
NPC Encounter Thursday



USE ISTIVIN P. 32
New City for Campaign

USE NEW MONSTER P. 57
Quick Wednesday Game

USE TO SUBSCRIBE

www.paizo.com

Dungeons & Dragons, Dungeon Master, DRAGON, DUNGEON, and POLYHEDRON are registered trademarks of Wizards of the Coast Inc., a subsidiary of Hasbro Inc., and are used by Paizo Publishing under license.

SMELLS OF THE CITY

BY ALEC AUSTIN,
BY KYLE HUNTER,

Along with sight and sound, the sense of smell is one of the primary ways characters experience the world. While most PCs lack the scent ability, this does not mean you should ignore a powerful tool for characterizing a city, neighborhood, or NPC.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

As they approach a city, characters often smell it before they get a clear look at it. The air around a seaside city is filled with the briny scent of the ocean, while a desert city smells of baked stone and sand. A fishing village built on mudflats may well reek of fish guts and rotting vegetation, while a town's tannery stinks of pollution and chemicals from miles away. A city's level of sanitation, the habits of its people, and its environs all influence what the PCs' first whiff of its air tells them about it; for example, a bloody and barbarous goblin city built atop a windy bluff is less likely to reek of filth and old blood than one built in the depths of a stifling cavern.

PUBLIC SANITATION

Most medieval European cities had streets that were little better than open sewers, as their citizens emptied their chamberpots out of their windows. In contrast, many Roman cities had aqueducts, sewers, and running water. The presence of magic in the D&D game allows for an even wider array of public sanitation options. A city whose streets are swept by skeletons and zombies may smell faintly of decay and rotting flesh,

while one that feeds its rubbish to a captive fire elemental may well choke on its own smoke when the wind blows the wrong way.

A city's size is another major influence on how polluted its atmosphere becomes. While a hamlet of people burning coal and firewood may produce only a little smoke, the chimneys of a city of thousands belch forth clouds of smoke and ashes. A metropolis (like London in the 19th century) may produce so much smoke that its sky becomes permanently overcast and impenetrable clouds of fog and soot constantly descend upon it. These problems may be alleviated through the widespread use of household magic or air elementals summoned to help keep the smoke at bay.

PEOPLE

The personal sanitation of a city's people affects its smell as thoroughly as any public sanitation measures it may have in place. For instance, a crowd of sweaty, unwashed goblins can instantly be distinguished from more fastidious people such as elves, who wash every day, or salamanders, whose personal fire burns away bodily filth. Barring extreme cases such as troglodytes, characters can gather a substantial amount of information from how the groups or individuals they encounter smell. A half-orc whose armor and weapons reek of rotting blood sends quite a different message from the aristocrat who douses himself in cologne and perfume as part of his daily toilette.

Generally, the wealthier a character is, the more resources he expends to make himself smell better. While this means baths, deodorant, and perfume in most human cities, different cultures might well have different standards. The respect that dwarves have for smiths and craftsmen might result in "perfumes" that make their wearer smell as if they had just spent several hours working with hot metal, while the devils of the Nine Hells might seek to intensify smells like brimstone or offal.

INDUSTRY

A city's industries have a dramatic effect on its smell. While tanneries and dying vats stink of chemicals, slaughterhouses reek of blood, and forges and foundries smell of sparks, smoke, and heated metal, a magical world has many other industries which produce their own scents. Alchemical laboratories and wizard's workshops could smell of ozone, acid, or anything imaginable, though unless their owner is distilling liquid sunlight or something similar, their mix of exotic scents is unlikely to be very pleasant. Just as mundane breweries infuse their surroundings with the scent of alcohol and fermenting grain, magical distilleries might well smell like their product's eventual flavor. A necropolis that specializes in mummification might smell of exotic spices, preservatives, and camphor oil, while one that focuses on raising armies of mindless undead is more likely to smell of freshly turned earth, decaying flesh, and moldering bones.

INTERIORS

Of course, any building is likely to smell of the material used to construct it. While this is obvious in the case of wood and stone buildings, more exotic building materials produce exotic smells. A tower lined in flesh, for instance, might stink of pus and other unpleasant fluids, while one made of iron is likely to smell of rust or freshly scoured metal.

Just as a character's social class can often be discerned by how she smells, the quality of a business or other establishment may be indicated by the nature of its scent. A stinking, muddy riverside tavern is unlikely to compare to an establishment smelling of baking bread and freshly cut flowers. Which scents indicate quality may vary. The cleanliness of a smith's forge is unlikely to correlate with the quality of his wares, and the high priest of a church filled with valuable incense may care more for his own status than the well being of the faithful.

PLAYER CHARACTERS

Characters who stumble into town after a long journey or a battle are unlikely to smell like roses, and this could easily bias their perceptions. After all, if you stink of orc guts, you eventually become accustomed to the scent. Similarly, characters who insist on contacting NPCs without washing or changing their attire might well receive a chilly reception (suffering up to a –10 circumstance penalty to Diplomacy and appropriate Bluff checks), and may need to turn to perfume or magic to cover the lingering scents of battle, especially if they have no time to bathe.

PERFUMES AND DEODORANT

Perfumes are available in a wide variety of scents, from the cheapest oils meant to cover even less pleasant smells, to the delicate and complex scents favored at the royal court. Cheap perfume replaces a smelly character's social penalties with a flat –1 penalty on Diplomacy and Bluff checks. More expensive and subtle perfumes negate these penalties completely or grant a bonus in interactions with characters that find them appealing. Cheap perfume grants a +10 circumstance bonus on any attempt made to track the wearer by scent, while other types of perfume grant a +4 circumstance bonus.

Alchemical deodorant helps destroy a character's scent, negating any scent-based social penalties a character suffering. Attempts to track the character via scent suffer a –4 penalty. Each dose of perfume or deodorant lasts for 24 hours.

Item	Cost	Social Modifiers	Weight
Cheap perfume	2 sp	-1 penalty	—
Neutral perfume	2 gp	none	—
Expensive perfume	15 gp	+1 bonus	—
Masterwork perfume	50 gp	+2 bonus	—
Alchemical Deodorant	5 gp	none	—

RESTING ON THE RUN

BY CHRIS FRY
BY KYLE HUNTER

"After dispatching the ancient guardian, you find yourselves before a large door, one that obviously leads into the Inner Temple. The door creaks open, revealing..."

PC: "Hey, wait! We're not going anywhere yet! That golem was tough, and we've got to replenish hit points and spells! We're going to stop and rest here."

"You're going to stop and rest on the blood-soaked steps of a temple of Orcus? But you just arrived..."

PC: "Hey, it may be a little uncomfortable, but it's only for eight hours..."

There's no question that a party has the best chance of success when they are at their strongest, with maximum hit points and a full allotment of spells. Knowing this, most groups try to plan their movements so that they are fully rested and ready to go when it comes time to take on the biggest, meanest threats. The problem is that they usually don't know what's lurking around the next bend in the dungeon corridor. This can result in an overly cautious group of adventurers who would rather rest than take a chance at being unprepared for "just one more room."

As a DM, you can't always anticipate when or where your party is going to want to set up camp. While leaving the dungeon to rest is probably the safest option, no one wants to "give up ground" when fighting through an enemy stronghold, so parties often try to catch the requisite eight hours of rest wherever they are, despite the inhospitable, uncomfortable, and generally dangerous surroundings. With this in mind, here are a few optional rules to make your players work for their rest.

MAKING CAMP

Before hit points can be recovered and spells can be regained, the party must establish where they will be making camp. Some groups prefer to return to the closest cleared-out room, while others may be content just flopping down in the middle of the hallway where they just fought their latest battle. Dungeons, are cramped, crowded, and not designed for the comfort and convenience of the loitering wanderer. Of course, a skilled adventurer knows how to make the most out of any situation.

When your party decides to stop and rest within the dungeon, have them make a Survival check to set up a suitable campsite. The base DC of this check should be 10, adjusted by the following:

Condition	Adjustment to Base DC
Per additional party member after the first	+2
Inhospitable conditions (dampness, extreme temperatures, uneven ground, dangerous flora, etc.)	+2
Area has been designed/modified for habitation by humanoid creatures (furniture, tapestries, rugs, firepits, etc.)	−4

Once the base DC is established, the skill check roll is adjusted by the following:

Factor	Adjustment to Roll
Per additional party member that successfully assists	+2
Familiarity with local area/terrain	+2
Access to available stores and provisions (food, potable water, fuel) in the area	+2
Party re-uses a previously successfully established campsite	+4

Keep in mind that other factors (level of illumination, fatigue, etc.) could affect the skill check. A character can search for 10 minutes to take 10 on the check, but normally cannot take 20 because there are consequences for failure.

Once the check is made, the quality of the campsite is determined based on the difference between the roll and the target number.

Missed by 5 or more: No place well suited for a camp can be found nearby. The party can still opt to stop and rest even after a blown skill check, but the benefits (if any) of such rest will be negligible. No hit points are regained for resting. Arcane spellcasters do not get enough uninterrupted rest to prepare new spells.

Missed by less than 5: The conditions or terrain prevents adequate rest. No hit points are regained for resting. Arcane spellcasters must make a DC 15 Concentration check to overcome the discomfort and get into the proper state of mind needed to prepare new spells.

Success: The party establishes a functional camp. While not the most comfortable or luxurious of rest sites, the characters manage to make the most of things and can get enough well-deserved rest (assuming nothing untoward happens during the time...). Hit points are regained after 8 hours of resting at a rate of 1 hp/level. Arcane spellcasters can prepare new spells.

Successful by +10 or more: Hit points are regained after 8 hours of resting at a rate of 1 hp/level. Arcane spellcasters can prepare spells as normal. In addition, the drain on the party's stores (in the form of food, water, torches, fuel, etc.) is reduced by one half, reflecting the group's ability to be more efficient and use resources at hand.

OTHER SUGGESTIONS, THREATS, AND OBSTACLES

Even with a successful camp established, stopping in the same place for several hours in a dungeon setting is a dangerous proposition. Here are some suggestions for making the rest break a little more interesting:

Wandering Monsters: The classic bane of camping in a dungeon, wandering creatures could be attracted to the light of a party's campfire or the smell of a meal being prepared, or they might just happen upon a party that is camped along their patrol route. Alternatively, the remains from the party's most recent battle could attract scavengers such as rats, carrion crawlers, or oozes. Intelligent foes should take the opportunity to size up the party's strength, possibly waiting until most are asleep or otherwise distracted to attack. Or they could use the extra time to set up an ambush or get reinforcements.

Resetting Traps and Wards: A party may defeat traps and magical wards to win through an area, but in many cases those same traps and protections may be set to renew themselves after a period of time. Nothing is worse than realizing that you've spread your bedroll out over an electrified floor, or that the altar in the corner recharges its unholy power every four hours, or that the pieces of the stone golem are set to reassemble themselves six hours after its defeat.

Dangerous Ecologies: Dungeons, especially natural caverns, may contain dangers that are not readily apparent to the average adventurer. A cavern may be dry when the party decides to rest there, only to flood without warning with the incoming tide. Innocuous looking fungi may slowly release spores into the air that prove to be toxic over several hours. A horde of stirges or other vermin could use the chamber as a route when leaving for or returning from a hunt. If you use any of these options, be sure to allow the characters a chance to find a clue or notice some sign that the campsite may not be suitable for very long.

Keep in mind that the point is not to penalize your players for being cautious, but to encourage them to extend that same caution to non-combative encounters such as resting to recover and prepare. Asking the players to use their skills and take precautions in a dungeon makes things a little more realistic, and the occasional encounter with the unexpected makes something as straightforward as making camp a little more exciting and memorable.

II

FOOL'S ERRAND

We continue to counter the weird larva to the copper dragon that bought it. I thought it best to use a less traveled exit out of the Dark. Most can't make it across the Great Chasm, but I've got friends. The last thing we need is to run into some lame adventurers on their way in."

LOOPS

TAGGIT

DOWNER

THE GITHZANKI

IZANK

A LOT OF TRAFFIC LATE MANY FLE THE WAR I OUBLIETTE.

KAIZIR AND EEONA ARE A LOVELY COUPLE: A SVIRFNEBLIN AND DESMODU THAT RUN AN EXPENSIVE BUT DISCREET FERRY SERVICE. UNLIKE MOST OF US DOWN HERE, THEY'RE NOT COMPLETE EVIL BASTARDS. I MET KAIZIR ON THE GRAY CORSAIR'S EXPEDITION.

IT'S AMAZING HOW MANY THINK THEY CAN JUST KILL US AND STEAL MY YRTHAK.

WE'RE NO FRIEND TO THE DROW, BUT YOU DID US A SERVICE KILLING THE BEHOLDER, MANGLECRAMPS.

BE CAREFUL AFTER WE SET YOU DOWN. NO ONE HAS ***SET OFF*** DOWNER'S LITTLE ***TRAP.***

YOUR TRAP?

MY MASTERPIECE! COMMISSIONED YEARS AGO BY GARRIOK.

I BOUGHT MY HOUSE WITH THE MONEY.

LOOPS. FOLLOW HIM. I DON'T LIKE THIS.

Story and art by **Kyle Stanley Hunter**. Lettering by **Sean Glenn**. Downer is ©2005 Kyle Stanley Hunter. A **Super Unicorn** production. www.superunicorn.com

YOU PUT ALL THIS WORK INTO SOMETHING, AND NO ONE SO MUCH AS LOSES A FINGER.
YOU SHOULD SEE WHAT HAPPENS TO THE POOR SUCKERS STANDING ON THAT PLATFORM OUTSIDE.
GRIMTOOTH WUZ HERE
DISARM
ARM
FIRE
CHEST
ONE FALSE MOVE AND THIS WHOLE ADVENTURE COULD END NOW.
DOWNER NO!
I WON'T LET YOU HURT MY FRIENDS!
NO! OUT! OUT! OUT! NO ONE POSSESSES ME!
FIRE
KERCHUNK
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!
I JUST SAVED YOUR SO-CALLED FRIENDS FROM YOUR STUPIDITY!
NOW THE TRAP IS DISARMED.
HA-HA, YOU THINK I WOULD CORRECTLY LABEL SOMETHING IN COMMON?
TO BE CONTINUED

THE ORC AND PIE EDITION

Illustration by Stan Shaw

Several years ago, Monte Cook (one of the guys behind the Third Edition of D&D, for the two of you out there who don't know... and thanks for reading my column, mom and dad) wrote up an adventure that occupies equal parts myth, legend, and infamy in the halls of gaming.

Its official name is "The World's Shortest (Yet Technically Complete) Adventure," but it is usually referred to as "The Orc and the Pie."

It goes something like this: There's this ten-by-ten room. In the room is a piece of pie. The pie is guarded by an orc. The goal is to kill the orc and eat the pie.

The adventure, which started out as a parody, has taken on a life of its own. Monte has been known to run the adventure at cons, and there are even T-shirts that victorious pie-eaters can buy. The Orc and the Pie has spawned fan fiction, filk songs, and a forthcoming series of novels to be written by Margaret Weis & Tracy Hickman.

(Well, maybe I made most of that up, but trust me, mom and dad, it's really popular.)

Though I've been familiar with The Orc and the Pie for years, I never got a chance to actually play it, until now.

•

"Are we ever going to play D&D?" my stepson Nolan asked me late one afternoon as we washed dishes together.

"I hope so," I said. "I've just been really busy." In the last few months, my life has gotten very full. I'm writing more and more professionally, and I've been out of the house an average of four nights a week. Both kids have massive homework commitments, and equally massive commitments to hanging out with their friends.

He handed me a dish to dry. "We've been trying for like a year, Wil."

"I know," I said. "It's just so hard to find the time to prepare an adventure, and I don't want it to suck." I dried the last dish and turned off the sink.

"Well, I hope we can play soon," he said. "Can I go across the street?"

"Sure. Have fun."

I stood alone in the kitchen and watched birds hop around on my patio. "D&D is a great opportunity to hang out and bond with the kids, you moron." I thought to myself. "You know what you need to do? You need to make the time to play. It doesn't have to be anything major, you know. Hell, it could be as simple as The Orc and the Pie."

Of course! It was that simple. I raced to The Internets and looked up Monte's website. I printed out the adventure, and got to work. Fifteen minutes later, my dining room table looked like a snapshot from high school: The PHB, a DMG and screen, a map and dice.

I called across the street, and asked my neighbor to send Nolan home.

"Wil? Am I in trouble?" he called from the front door.

"No," I said, "Just come into the dining room, please."

He walked in, and his eyes lit up.

"We're playing D&D?!"

"Sort of," I said. "This is just a quick adventure to warm us up for the real thing."

I took his barbarian out of my DMG and handed it to him. After about thirty minutes of preparation, we were ready to go.

"Okay, you're standing in front of a wooden door. The corridor continues behind you for about fifteen feet, and as far as you can see ahead."

"I open the door!"

"Okay, you open the door, and see an orc, guarding a piece of pie."

He frowned. "What?"

"There's an orc, and there's a pie. What do you want to do? The orc looks mad."

"Well, I guess I'll attack the orc and take his pie."

"Okay. You've surprised him, so you have initiative. Make an attack roll."

He looked down at the table. "Oh! Wait!"

He ran back to his room, and emerged with a red velour bag. "It's the dice you gave me," he said.

I made a Will save and managed to not leap up from the table and hug him.

He pulled out a black d20 and rolled it: 18.

"Woah! Eighteen! Cool!"

"Well, you sure hit him. Roll for damage."

He grabbed a d12 and flicked it up into the air. It bounced down off the edge of the PHB and came to a rest against my DM screen.

"Ten!" He said. "Yes!"

"Your great axe whistles through the air, and cleaves the orc in half! What are you going to do with the pie?"

"Wait." Nolan said. "That's it?"

"Well... yeah. It's The World's Shortest (Yet Technically Complete) Adventure." Uh-oh. Did I just ruin D&D for him?

"Wil, that was—"

"Lame?"

"Fun!" He grinned. "When can we play for real?"

"Soon." I said. "Finish your pie."

Check out Wil's blog at wilwheaton.net.

FIRE EMBLEM
THE SACRED STONES

Centuries of peace is eclipsed by war as an age-old trust is betrayed. Uncover the dark secrets that turned allies into enemies as you fight to free your kingdom. Evolve your armies as you plot a master strategy in Fire Emblem: The Sacred Stones.
Only for Game Boy Advance.

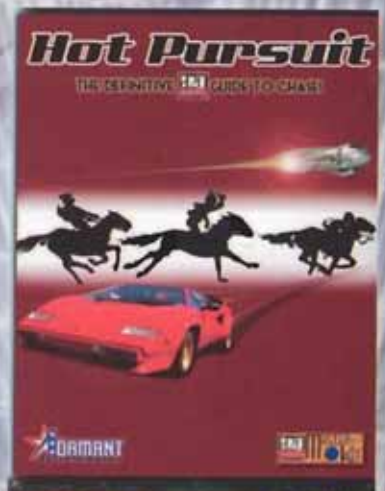
EVERYONE
E
Fantasy Violence

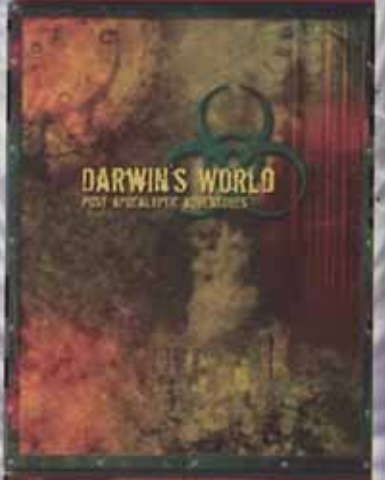
© 2004 2005 Nintendo/INTELLIGENT SYSTEMS. TM, ® and the Game Boy Advance logo are trademarks of Nintendo. © 2005 Nintendo

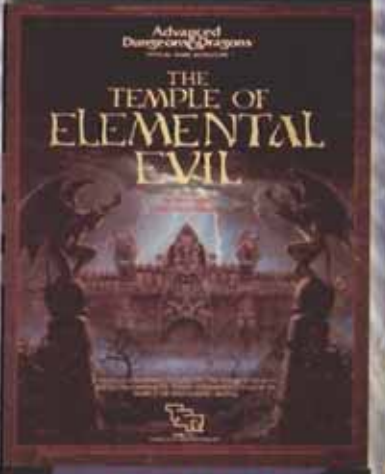
RPGNOW.COM

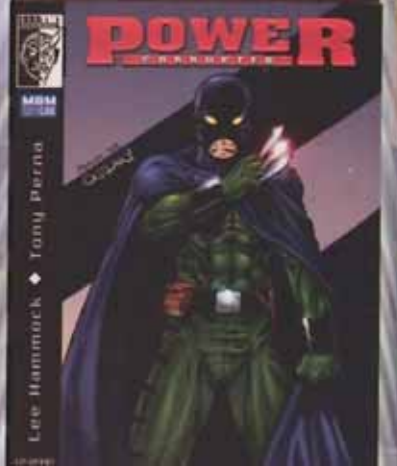
The industry leader in PDF sales now offers what no other PDF site does:

BOOKS.









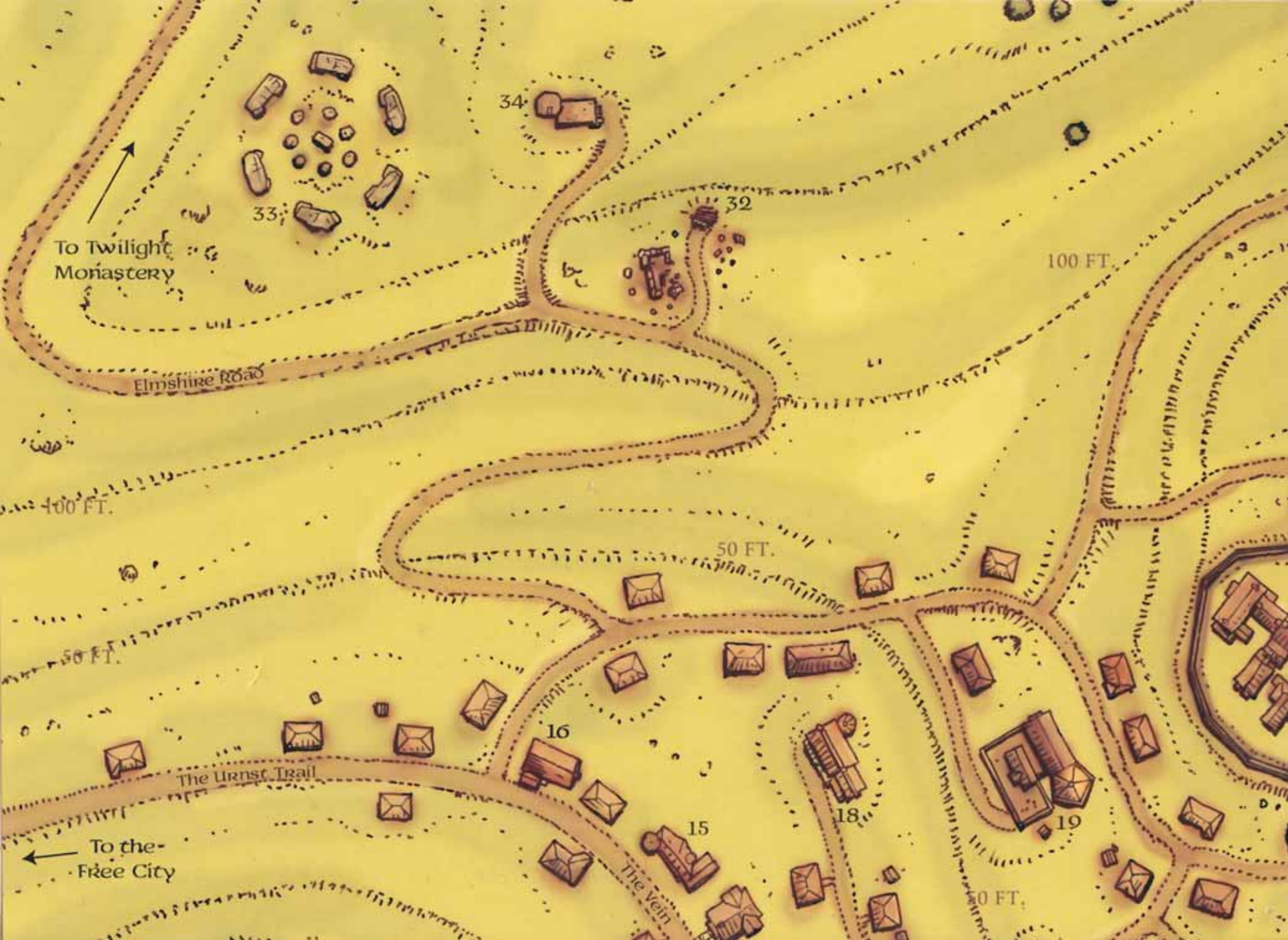
Hundreds of games not found in your local games store, now available for your hard-drive or bookshelf

For a free sample, visit www.RPGNow.com/free

To Whispering Cairn
Company Road
100 FT.
31
35
20
50 FT.
150 FT.
100 FT.
50 FT.
30
27
28
24

©2008 Wizards of the Coast

50 FT.
100 FT.
50 FT.
100 FT.
100 FT.
50 FT.
14
23
17
12
13
4
3
2
5
The Vein
1
6
7
8
11
Usher Ave
9
10
0


34
33
32
To Twilight Monastery
100 FT.
Elmshire Road
400 FT.
50 FT.
50 FT.
16
The Ursst Trail
15
18
19
To the Free City
The Vein
0 FT.

DUNGEON #124

MAP & HANDOUT SUPPLEMENT

PRODUCED BY PAIZO PUBLISHING, LLC.
WWW.PAIZO.COM

Joachim Barrum

THE WHISPERING CAIRN

By Erik Mona

A handful of would-be adventurers gathers to explore an ancient tomb, eager to trade their discoveries for a ticket to a better life. What they find within presages the advent of the Age of Worms, and era of darkness, decay, and writhing doom. An Age of Worms Adventure Path adventure for 1st-level characters.

Steve Prescott

Dungeon #124 Map & Handout Supplement © 2005 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Steve Prescott

Steve Prescott

Fulge,

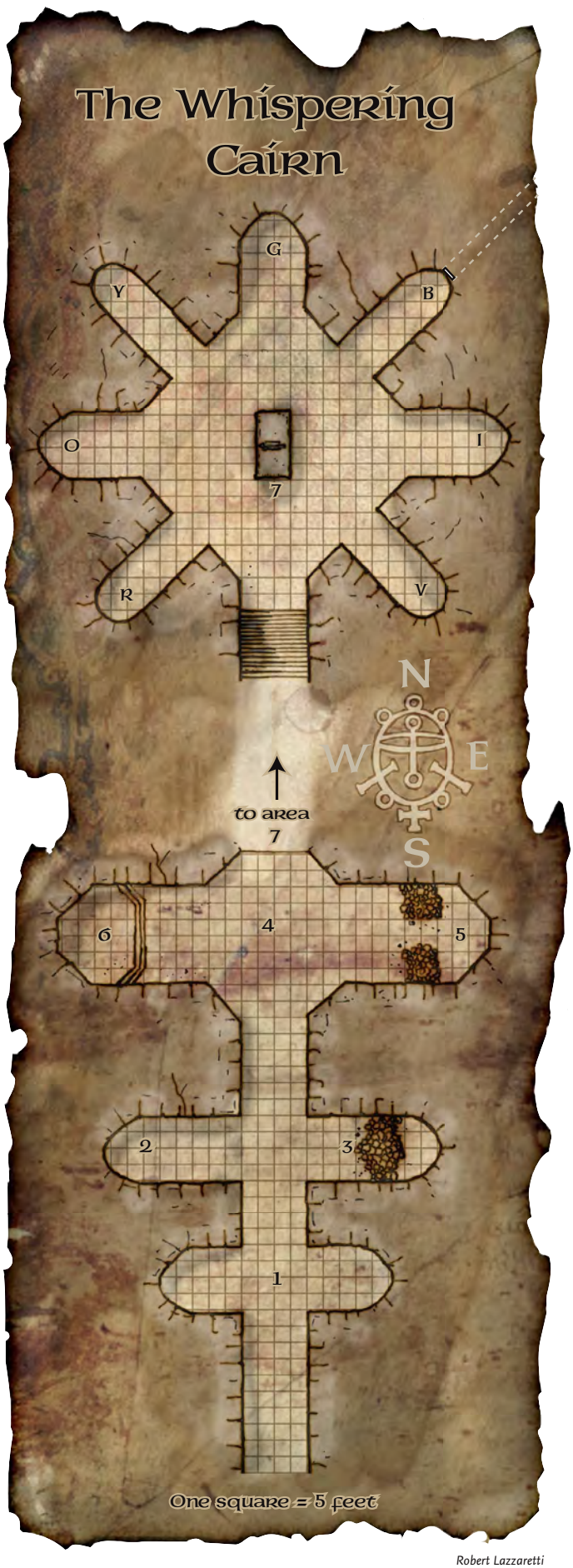
I need you in Diamond Laße, my boy. The cult situation has grown worse. Deep within Dourstone Mine they're studying things brought in from the southern hills. Green worms and unßillable zombies. I nießed one of the worms for you to study.

✧

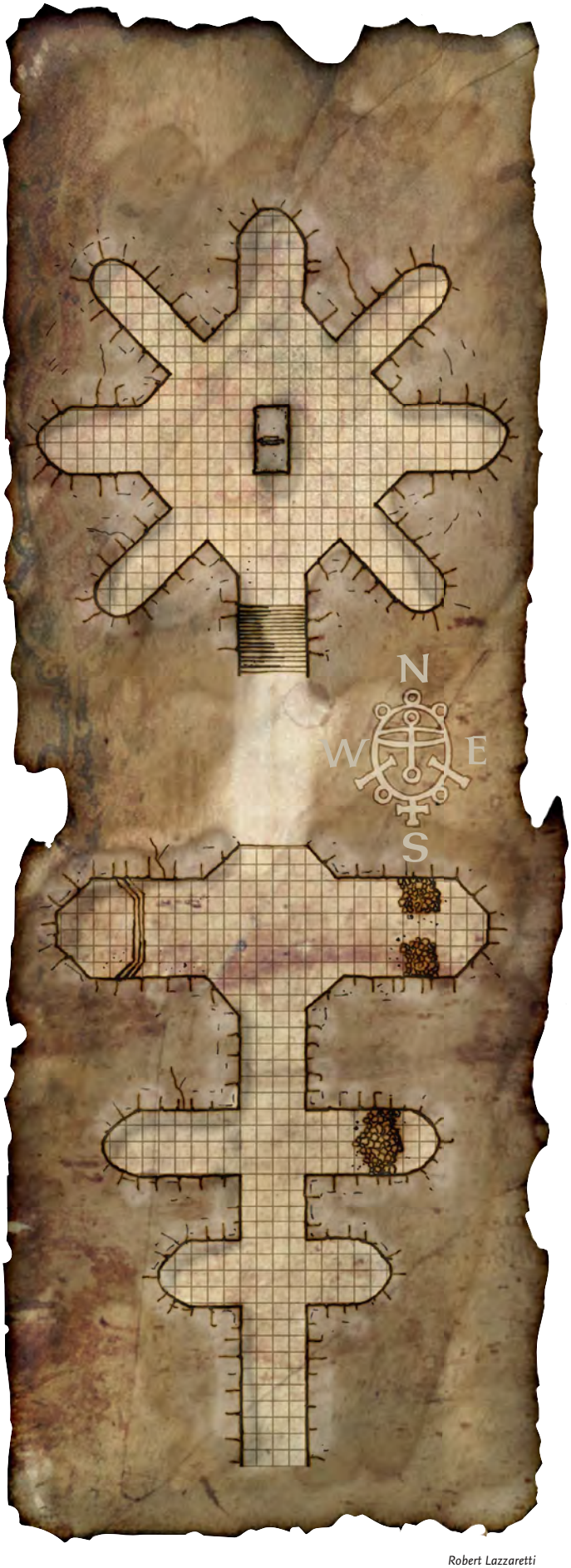
I'll put you up in the old observatory. Show this letter to the big white half-orc at the Feral Dog. He'll help you get settled. I trust you'll find these coins sufficient to cover your travel from the Free City.

S.

Dungeon #124 Map & Handout Supplement © 2005 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.



Robert Lazzaretti

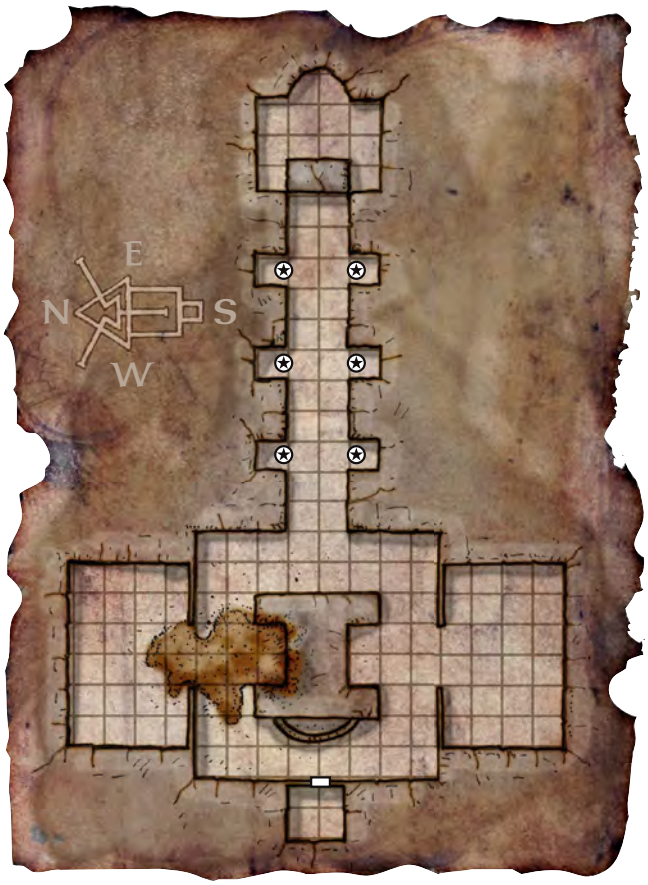


Robert Lazzaretti

Dungeon #124 Map & Handout Supplement © 2005 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Steve Prescott

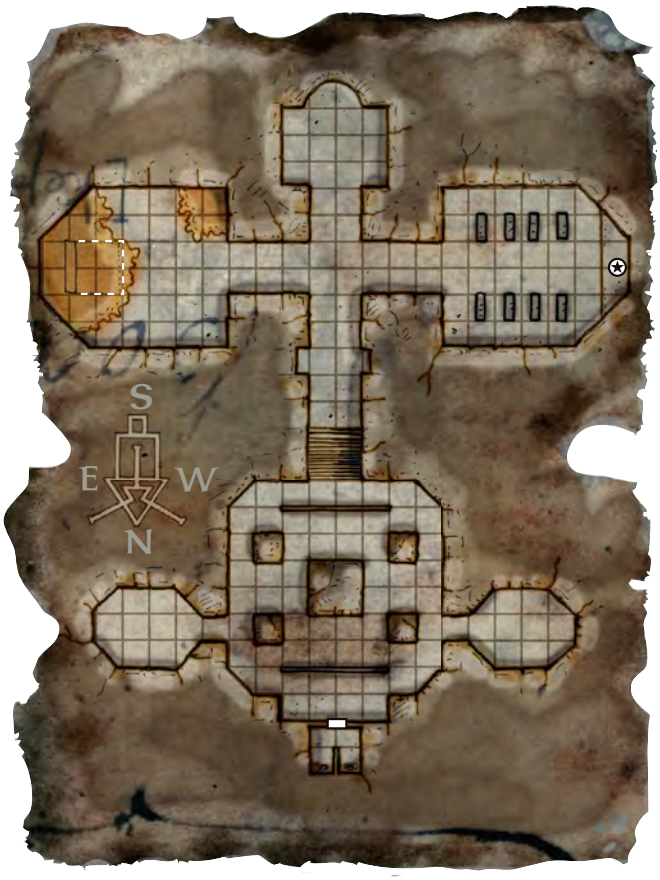
Robert Lazzaretti



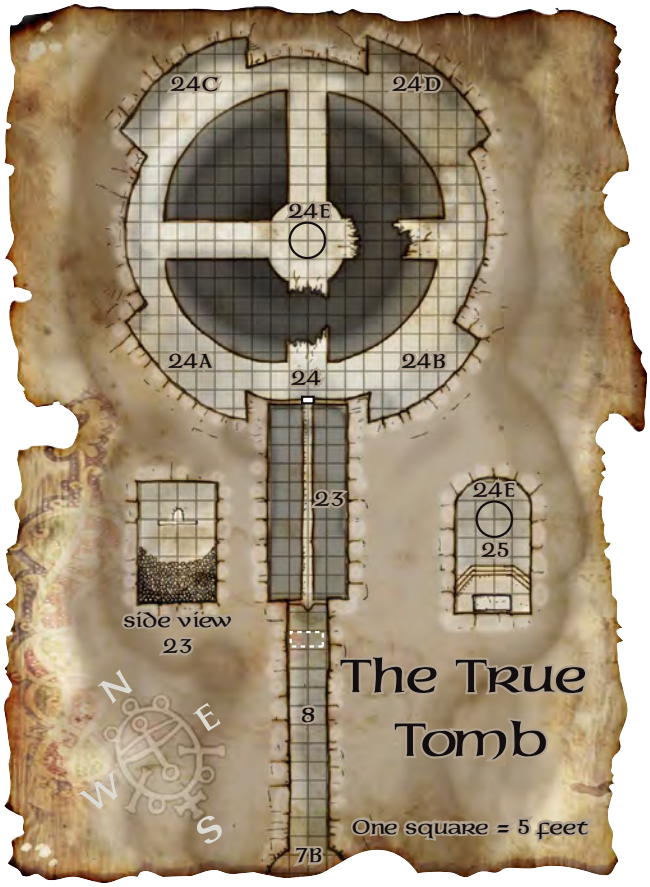
Robert Lazzaretti

Dungeon #124 Map & Handout Supplement © 2005 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

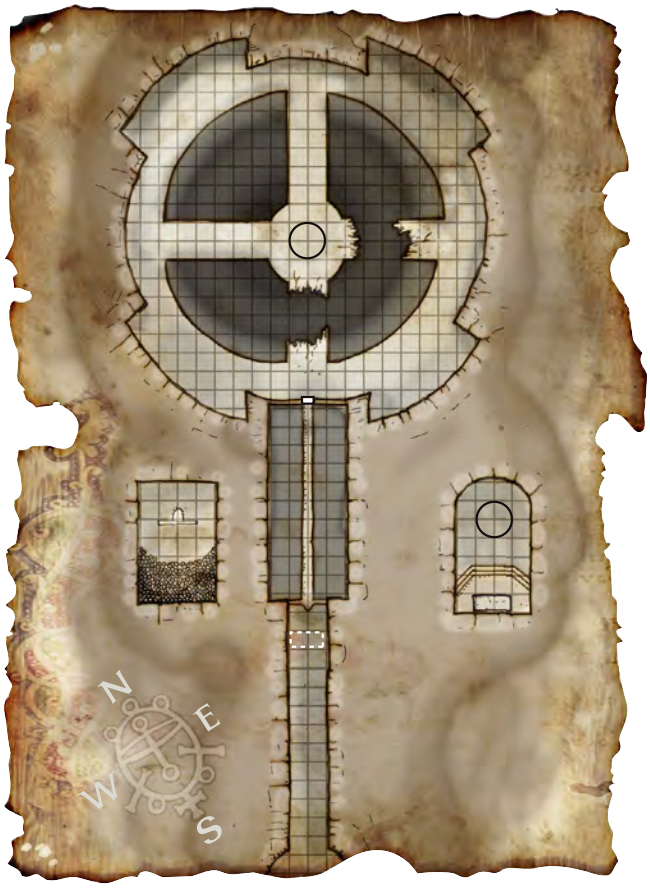
Robert Lazzaretti



Robert Lazzaretti



Robert Lazzaretti



Robert Lazzaretti

Dungeon #124 Map & Handout Supplement © 2005 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Alastor Land

Eva Widermann

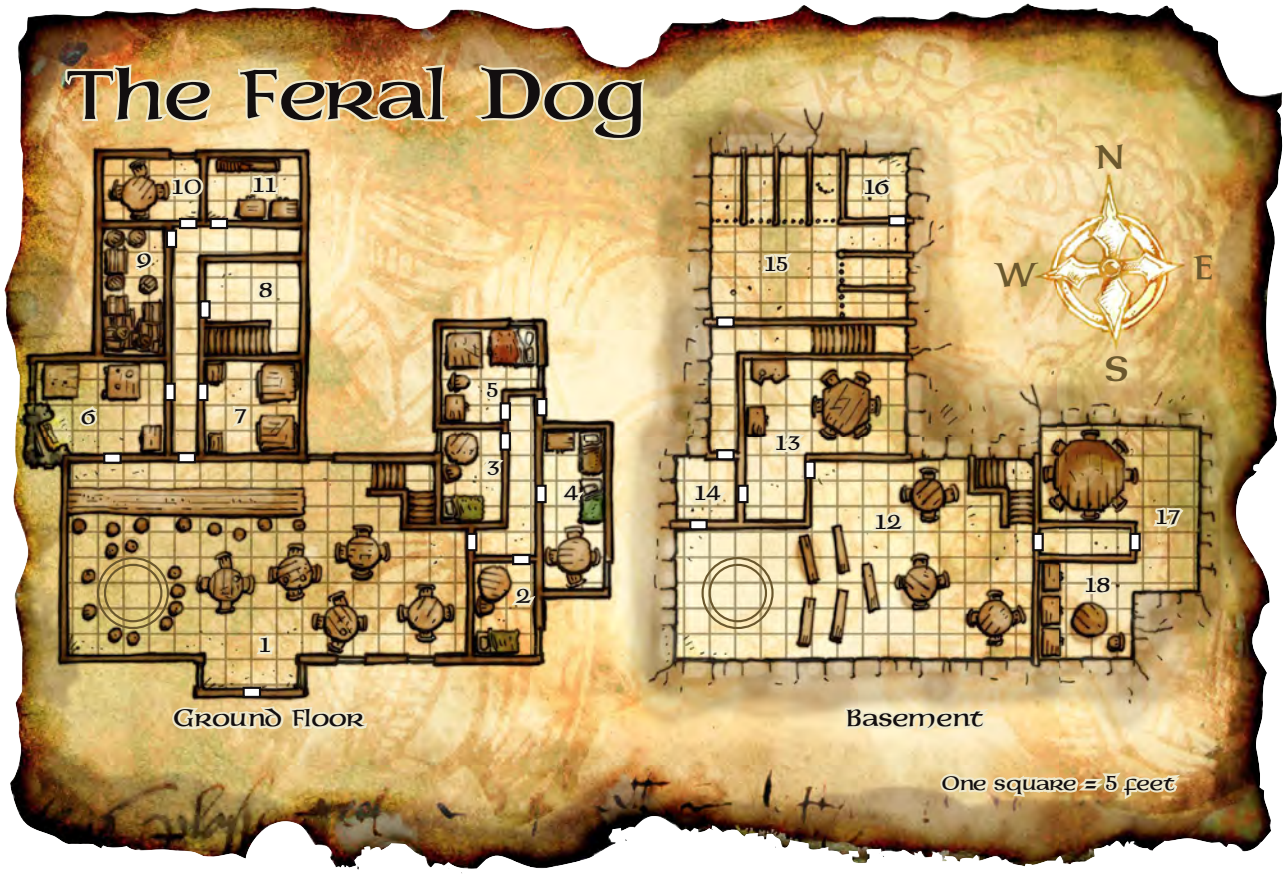
Wind Warrior

Eva Widermann

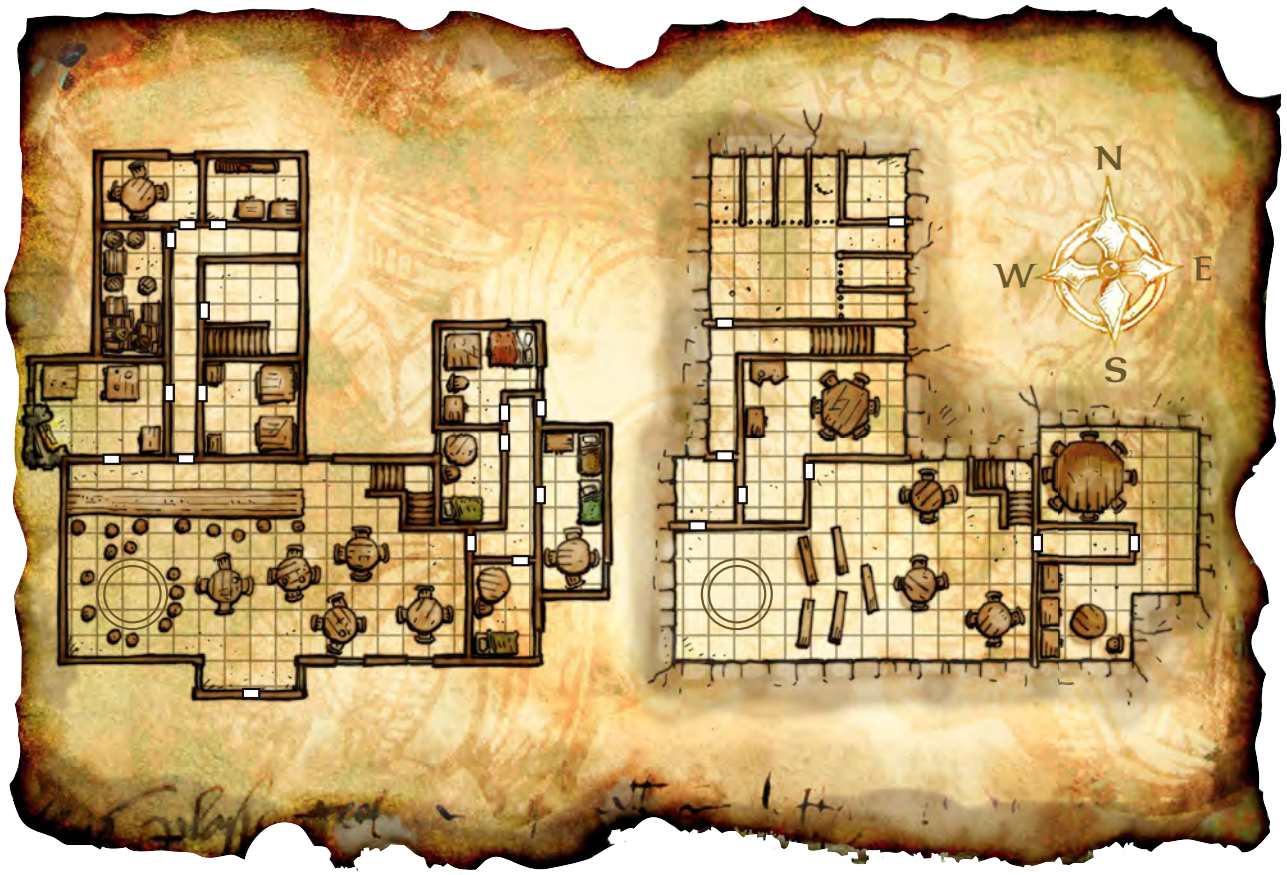
Robert Lazzaretti

Robert Lazzaretti

Dungeon #124 Map & Handout Supplement © 2005 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.



Robert Lazzaretti



Robert Lazzaretti

Dungeon #124 Map & Handout Supplement © 2005 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Robert Lazzaretti

Robert Lazzaretti

Filge

Eva Widermann

Dungeon #124 Map & Handout Supplement © 2005 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Scaling the Adventure

"The Whispering Cairn" is designed for a group of four 1st-level characters, but with a little work it can be adapted for use by 2nd–3rd-level characters. Simply adjust all NPC character levels up as appropriate by a number equal to that which the average party level of your group deviates from 1. Don't forget to modify the amount of treasure found in the adventure appropriately. Specific changes to the adventure include:

2nd–3rd-level parties: Add a second acid beetle swarm to area **7**. Add a third lurking strangler to area **10**. Replace the Small earth elemental in area **13** with a Medium earth elemental. Add a second giant bombardier beetle to area **16**. Replace the Small water elemental in area **19** with a Medium water elemental, and add a second ghoul to area **21**. When the PCs trigger the Trap in area **23**, have it fire 1d4 lead spheres at each PC on the beam. Have the owlbear in the Land Farmstead at full health when the PCs encounter it. Add a second tomb mote to Observatory area **1**, and add a second bugbear zombie to area **11**.

AGE OF WORMS CONVERSION APPENDICES

Eberron (by Keith Baker)

Eberron is a world shaped by prophecy. Dragons and demons fought a terrible war at the dawn of history, and the mightiest of the fiends were bound in the underworld of Khyber. But bonds can always be broken. For tens of thousands of years, the dragon sages of Argonnessen have studied star, stone, and sea, seeking insights into the living prophecy that shapes the destiny of Eberron. Those who know the secrets of the Draconic Prophecy have heard of the Age of Worms: a time of terror, a reign of death, when dragon and human alike will be corrupted and enslaved by the ancient evils. The seers of Argonnessen know that this darkness will one day overtake Eberron; they believe that it is inevitable. The only question is when. Over the course of this Adventure Path, a sinister force will set the wheels of the age in motion: it will fall to the heroes to serve as the agents of destiny, to find a way to stop the Age of Worms.

The Wind Dukes

"The Whispering Cairn" introduces the idea of the Wind Dukes of Aaqa and the armies of Chaos, two ancient powers that fought at the dawn of time. In Eberron, the Queen of Chaos and Miska the Wolf-Spider were two of the mightiest children of Khyber. In the first age of Eberron, these beings and others of their ilk commanded vast armies of rakshasa and other fiends. When the couatl and the dragons rose up to fight the fiends that covered the land, they sought allies in all corners of the world, and ultimately even the outer planes. On Lamannia, the couatl emissary found a nation of mighty genies, and many were sympathetic to Eberron's plight. These were the Wind Dukes. Deadly warriors and powerful wizards, these elemental lords fought alongside the greatest of the dragons, and wind and fire scattered the armies of Khyber. Even today, the names of the Wind Dukes are still spoken in whispers in the ruined halls of Ashtakala.

But as powerful and valiant as the allies were, it was a battle that could not be won. The mightiest children of Khyber could not be destroyed: their spirits would simply reform. The couatl retired into Sarlona, seeking to find a way to bind the demon lords. Meanwhile, the dragons and the Wind Dukes took a different approach—creating a weapon that could banish a fiend's essence from the Eberron itself. The Wandering Dukes traveled across Eberron and all of the known planes in search of power. And ultimately, they created the *Rod of Law*, forged in dragonfire and cooled in purest elemental air. Unfortunately, it was only used once before it was lost—but Miska the Wolf-Spider has never been seen again.

It is believed that all of the Wind Dukes were destroyed in the war against the rakshasa, but their tombs and relics still remain.

The Seeker Lodge

The Seekers can be incorporated into Eberron as is, as a new secret society. However, they could be an unscrupulous arm of Morgrave University, or an agency aligned with members of the Aurum who possess a particular love for antiquities. Alternatively, the organization could be replaced with the Wayfinder Foundation—although Wayfinders are less likely to resort to subterfuge than Ulavant or Khellek.

Filge

In Encounter **5**, a male elf corpse tells Filge "the Guild of Wizardry was wrong to turn you out." This should be changed to "the Esoteric Order." The Esoteric Order of Aureon is described on page 147 of the *Sharn: City of Towers* sourcebook. Filge's necromantic experiments violated the principles of the Esoteric Order, but as a rational arcane sage, Filge had no interest in joining the Order of the Emerald Claw, one of the usual bastions for necromancers. Humiliated, he made his way from Sharn to Diamond Lake, and he has been lurking in the shadows of the great towers ever since.

Diamond Lake

Diamond Lake is located in the Kingdom of Breland. Find the town of Moonwatch at the western edge of the Hilt, and follow the trade road to the northeast. When the road reaches the Dagger River, you will find yourself at Diamond Lake, high above the waters of the Dagger. On a clear day you can see the towers of Sharn—which serves in place of the Free City—to the southeast. Three times each week barges stop at the lower docks of the town, picking up shipments of ore to be processed in the foundries of the City of Towers. The small lake that gives the town its name is located up at the top of the cliffs, and some old salts claim that there are tunnels at the bottom of Diamond Lake that lead all the way down to the Dagger itself.

The mines of Diamond Lake run down into the cliffs along the Dagger's edge. The majority of the tombs and cairns in the hills around the town are tied to three cultures: the ancient goblins of the Dhakaani Empire, Malleon the Reaver and the other humans who first settled the region during the migration from Sarlona, and the strange, alien architecture of the daelkyr—the remnants of the war that shattered goblin civilization in ages past. And then there are a few older tombs, which legends claim date back to the Age of Demons itself. For centuries these structures have drawn scholar and adventurer alike, both hoping to uncover new ruins from the fallen civilizations—and to find treasures overlooked by those who have gone before.

Dungeon #124 Map & Handout Supplement © 2005 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Aside from the Dagger River to the east, few physical changes are required to use Diamond Lake in Eberron. Specific NPCs will be dealt with in the conversion notes for the adventures in which they appear. However, there are a few changes that will help to draw Diamond Lake more fully into Eberron, as outlined below.

Tidwoad's
The dragonmarked House Kundarak dominates the banking trade. As a result, the banker Tidwoad is actually **Tidwoad d'Kundarak** (LE male dwarf expert 5), who uses his dragonmark gift of *arcane lock* to help secure his many vaults. Tidwoad's bank also holds a House Sivis *speaking stone*, allowing residents to send and receive messages for a fee. A number of Sivis gnomes reside in the shop to operate the stone and assist Tidwoad with bookkeeping. The senior Sivis representative is **Lylana Lyrriman d'Sivis** (N female gnome bard 1/expert 3), a garrulous woman who will keep customers talking for as long as possible.

Healing
The largest dragonmarked outpost in Diamond Lake is the Jorasco House of Healing, maintained by **Taskar d'Jorasco** (N male halfling adept 4/dragonmark heir 3). Taskar has a number of adepts and mundane healers in his employ, and he caters to travelers, injured miners, and adventurers who take unwise risks in the ruins. Healing spells and potions should be obtained at the refuge, as temple priests rarely sell their services.

Religion
The Chapel of Heironeous is instead dedicated to the sovereign Dol Arrah, the goddess of honor and battle, and the wall fresco displays Dol Arrah in battle with the dark god known as the Mockery.

The Church of St. Cuthbert becomes a temple of the Silver Flame. The followers of the Flame have always striven to fight both spiritual and physical evils, and the zealous Jierian Wierus exhorts his congregation to battle the evil that lurks within all mortal flesh through their frequent acts of flagellation.

The Diamond Lake Boneyard is protected and maintained by the Restful Watch, a small and obscure cult that worships both the sovereign lord Aureon and the deity known as the Keeper. Followers of the Restful Watch believe that the keeper snatches worthy souls to protect them from Dolurrh, and that some day, when the time is right, he will return these souls and the dead will rise again.

The Ebon Triad reveres the Shadow, the Mockery, and the Keeper—though they have a very different view of the Keeper than the Restful Watch. This cult will be explored in greater detail in the second installment of the adventure path.

Getting the Players Involved
Consider the following options for characters belonging to Eberron's unique races:

Changelings: There are a few changelings in Diamond Lake. Most have ties to the Midnight Salute; Purple Prose may actually be a changeling herself.

Kalashtar: A kalashtar seer has had precognitive visions of a terrible disaster, but she cannot narrow the focus to determine its exact nature. A kalashtar may have been sent to the town to watch for any signs of this rising evil.

Shifters: There should be a number of shifters at the Bronzewood Lodge, but shifter rangers and scouts could also be attached to the garrison; the question is whether the character is a child of the wilds, or a member of Brelish society.

Warforged: The warforged are tireless workers with no need for food, and as such they would be welcome in the mines. However, established miners might see a new wave of warforged as a threat to job security. A former warforged soldier might continue to serve at the garrison. Or perhaps a warforged adventurer has become fascinated with the ruins: as a member of a race with no history, he is intrigued by the remnants of fallen nations.

The Forgotten Realms (by Eric L. Boyd)

The Age of Worms Adventure Path can be incorporated into the Forgotten Realms with a minimum of work for the Dungeon Master. Each installment of the adventure path will be accompanied by a sidebar detailing suggested adaptations to the adventure. Note that in lieu of repeatedly saying "In the Realms, XXX is known as YYY," these sidebars use the convention "XXX (YYY)."

Future Forgotten Realms products will not treat the events in the Age of Worms Adventure Path as "canon," but the unfolding of events suggested in these sidebars will not diverge unduly from the "core Realms" unless the characters fail or the Dungeon Master wishes them to. Each Forgotten Realms conversion appendix may refer to various Forgotten Realms products, including, but not limited to, *City of Splendors: Waterdeep*, *Faiths & Pantheons*, *Lost Empires of Faerûn*, *Serpent Kingdoms*, and *Underdark*, but only the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting* should be strictly necessary to adapt the campaign to the Forgotten Realms.

Characters in the Realms begin their careers in the town of Daggerford (Diamond Lake) along the banks of the River Delimibiyr exploring the Forlorn Hills (Cairn Hills) and the Lizard Marsh (Mistmarsh) before moving to Waterdeep (Free City), Longsaddle (Magepoint), the Chultan Peninsula (Amedio Jungle), the Western Heartlands (Alhaster and Redhand), and Skull Gorge (Rift Canyon and Wormcrawl Fissure). For those DMs who used the Shackled City Adventure Path in the Realms, note that these sidebars assume that the city of Cauldron sits in a caldera on the Chultan Peninusla, on the northern slopes of the Sanrach Mountains, just east of the Jungles of Chult.

Diamond Lake
The Adventure Path begins in late spring of the Year of Lightning Storms (1374 DR) in the town of Daggerford (Diamond Lake), which lies along the northern bank of the River Delimibyr (Diamond Lake) where the Trade Way crosses the river. Aside from a brief mention in the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*, further details about Daggerford may be found in the second edition products *N5: Under Illefarn*, *Volo's Guide to the Sword Coast*, and *The North*. The last is available as a free PDF download on the Wizards of the Coast website, *http://www.wizards.com/dnd*, and contains a map of the town.

Daggerford differs from Diamond Lake in that it is walled, it lies on the banks of a river ford, not a lake, and, until recently it was a much nicer place than Diamond Lake and ruled by a hereditary duke. The most important difference is that the mining industry does not dominate Daggerford to

Dungeon #124 Map & Handout Supplement © 2005 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

the extent that it does in Diamond Lake, so that the conflicts among the mine owners are but one of many threads of conflict within the town of Daggerford. The DM can either use the map of Diamond Lake with Realms-version place names or the Daggerford map found at the above-mentioned URL.

The most prominent deities in Daggerford include Chauntea (Beory), Lathander (replaces St. Cuthbert, although dogmatically Helm is a better substitute), Tempus (Kord), Tymora (Norebo), and Tyr (Heironeous). Local sects include the Bronzewood Lodge of Silvanus (Obad-hai), the Cult of Ascended Lovers (Cult of the Green Lady, a local sect that venerates Kelemvor and a dark aspect of Mystra in lieu of Wee Jas), and the Twilight Monastery is managed by monks of the Old Order. The Ebon Triad is a sinister cult venerating three gods slain during the Time of Troubles (1358 DR): Bane (Hextor), Bhaal (Erythnul), and Myrkul (Vecna). The Realms-version of the Ebon Triad seeks to bring about the rebirth of the Dead Three. Unlike in the standard Adventure Path, where cultists of the Ebon Triad are dangerous, deluded fools, the Realms-version of the cult is actually onto something, acting as key players in a centuries-old divine plot initiated during the Age of Netheril by Jergal, Lord of the End of Everything.

Nearly two years ago, unknown assassins poisoned the Duke of Daggerford, Pwyll "Greatshout" Daggerford, his sister, Lady Bronwyn, and his bastard brother, Lord Llewellyn Longhand, leaving the duchy without an heir. (Luzane Parrin's late husband died in the same incident.) The perpetrator(s) were never caught. Soon thereafter, the Town Council met and elected Lanod Ondabar (Neff) of Irieabor, the little-known brother of the well-respected **Delfen "Yellowknife" Ondabar** (Allustan, but CN, short, and increasingly stout), as governor-mayor. Rumors suggest that the Town Council settled on Lanod Ondabar as a compromise candidate and lesser evil in lieu of Balabar Smenk.

As governor-meneral, Lanod quickly appointed his old adventuring companion, Cubbin, as sheriff and began selling political favors from the former duke's castle to the highest bidder. In less than 24 months, the once-proud town of Daggerford has become synonymous with vice and exploitation, to the frustration of Sherlen Spearslayer (female variant of Captain Tolliver Trask). Long-established businesses have been sold, their owners forced out by "new investors" allied with Lanod and Cubbin.

In conscious imitation of the Lords of Waterdeep, the identities of the 23-member Town Council of Daggerford are nominally secret except to each other, but "everyone" knows the roster includes the town's guildmasters and most prominent clerics. The current Council roster includes **Baergon Bluesword** (CG male half-moon elf Ftr7/Clr7 [Tempus]), **Bando the Lame** (CG male lightfoot halfling Clr9 [Tymora]), **Derval Ironeater** (Dulok Blitzhame), guildmaster of the blacksmiths, **Korbus Brightjewel** (CN male rock gnome Ill7), guildmaster of jewelers and whitesmiths, **Liam Sunmist** (Jierian Wierus, LG male Tethyrian human Clr10 [Lathander]), **Maerovyna** (LG female Tethyrian human Clr9 [Chauntea]), **Nartan the Merchant** (LE male shield dwarf War9), guildmaster of merchants, and **Balabar Smenk**, guildmaster of the mine owners. Other guilds include the animal handlers, carpenters, farmers, heralds and runners, leatherworkers, moneylenders, physicians, pleaders, rivermen, scribes, spellcasters, tailors, tanners, taverners, and watermen.

Locations of note in Daggerford include the community stables (Lakeside Stables), the Barracks (Garrison), Black Stone Inn (the Midnight Salute), Delfen's Tower (Allustan's Residence), the Ducal Castle (Neff Manor), the Happy Cow (the Feral Dog), Zalamandra's Emporium (formerly River Shining Tavern), Daggerford Inn (Jalek's Flophouse), Farrel's Fine Jewelry and Apparel (Tidwoad's), and the Merchants' Guild (General Store). NPCs of note include Bitris Ironaxe (Bitris Ruthek), Demetira Landscraper (female shield dwarf variant of Jalek), Derwin Ironeater (Ragnolin Dourstone, brother of Derval), Filarion Filvendorson (Ellival Moonmeadow), Gauth Ironaxe (Gauth Grobadore), Kaulbach (female variant of Velias Childramun), Ransaran (Tyrol Ebberly),

The region surrounding Daggerford is best described in the web enhancement for *City of Splendors: Waterdeep*, found on the Wizard's of the Coast website. Waterdeep, City of Splendors (the Free City), lies 120 miles by highway through plains terrain to the west-northwest. Baron Criam's hold (Blackwall Keep) lies 15 miles west by river (downstream) or by trackless plains, on the edge of the Lizard Marsh. Julkoun (Blackstone) and Secomber (Elmshire) lay 90 and 165 miles east, respectively, by river (upstream) or by road/trail through hills. Bronzewood Lodge lies across the river and 90 miles to the east by trackless plains, near the northern edge of the Misty Forest. Daggerford's iron and silver mines lie 5 to 20 miles to the east of town by mountain trail, on the same side of the river, in the small range of mountains that rise up at the southern end of the Forlorn Hills (Cairn Hills). (This range is small enough that it does not show up on the general map of the Realms found in the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting* but does appear in the map accompanying the *City of Splendors: Waterdeep* web enhancement. The southern end of the Forlorn Hills lies east of Daggerford along the northern bank of the River Delimibyr, south of the Forlorn Hills and the trail that connects Secomber with the Trade Way.) Mount Illefarn (Greysmere) is the most prominent of the mountains and perhaps the only one to merit the name, while Grossetgrottel lies within a lesser known peak to the west.

Finally, note that half-orcs are the legacy of numerous invasions from the Spine of the World (the Pomarj), while human barbarians are likely descendants of the Uthgardt tribes that wander the north or the clans that live on the High Moor to the south and east.

Dungeon #124 Map & Handout Supplement © 2005 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Chad Du Lac & Jim Zubkavich

BACKDROP: DIAMOND LAKE

By Erik Mona

Kick off *Dungeon*'s new 12-adventure Age of Worms Adventure Path campaign with this overview of Diamond Lake, a run-down mining community nestled in hills laden with the tombs of a dozen lost civilizations.

Tirria, Auric, and Khellek

Chad Du Lac & Jim zubkavich

Dungeon #124 Map & Handout Supplement © 2005 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Balabar Smenk

Chad Du Lac & Jim zubkavich

Kullen

Chad Du Lac & Jim zubkavich

Allustan

Chad Du Lac & Jim zubkavich

Dungeon #124 Map & Handout Supplement © 2005 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

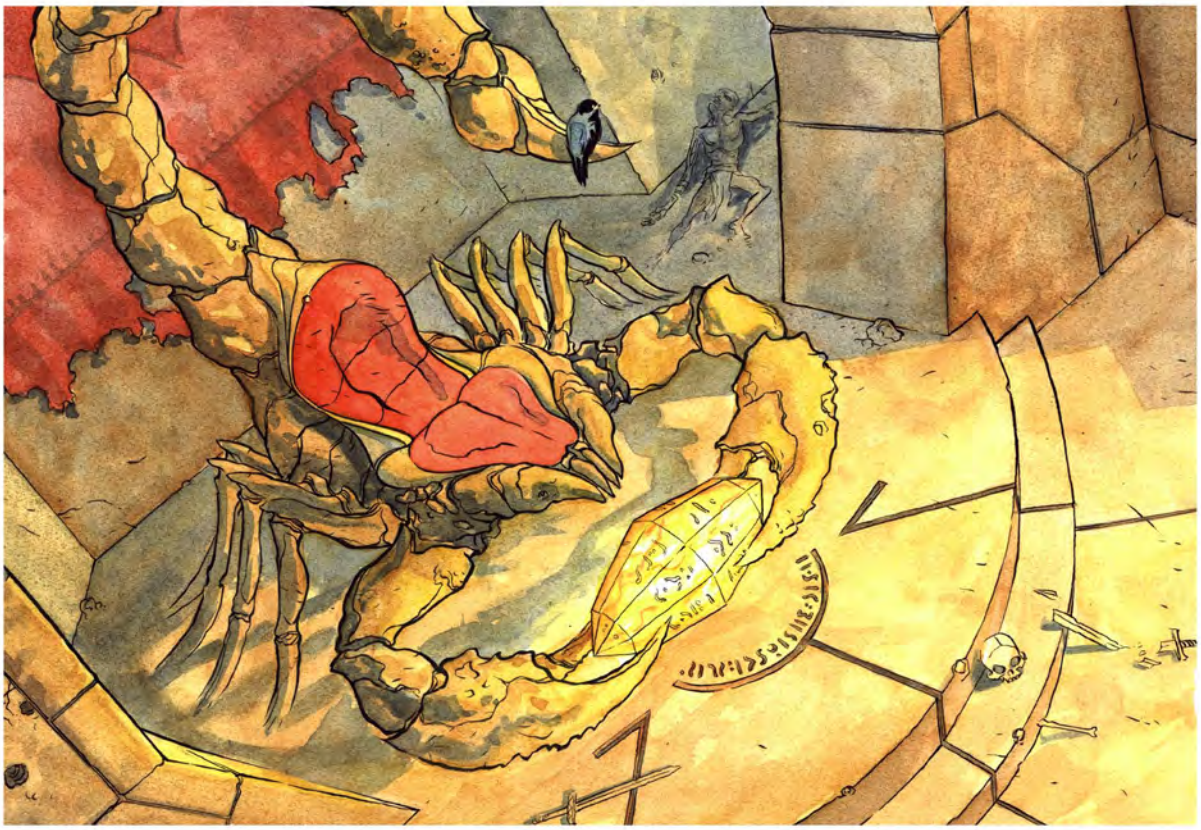
Ramón Pérez

TEMPLE OF THE SCOPRION GOD

by James Wyatt and Andy Collins

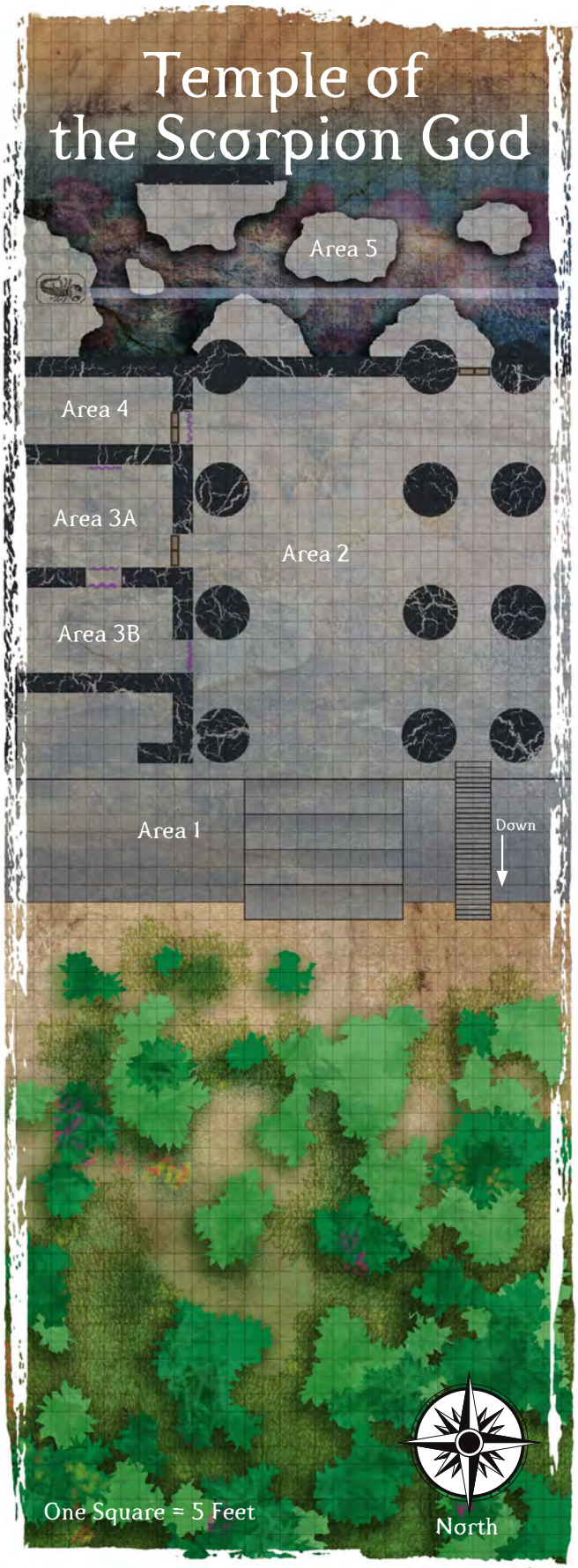
An insane villain plots ruin deep beneath the city of Sharn. In order to save the city, the PCs must find the one thing that can stop him, an enormous Siberys dragonshard hidden somewhere in the jungles of the lost continent of Xen'drik. An EBERRON adventure for 7th-level characters.

The Scorpion Throne

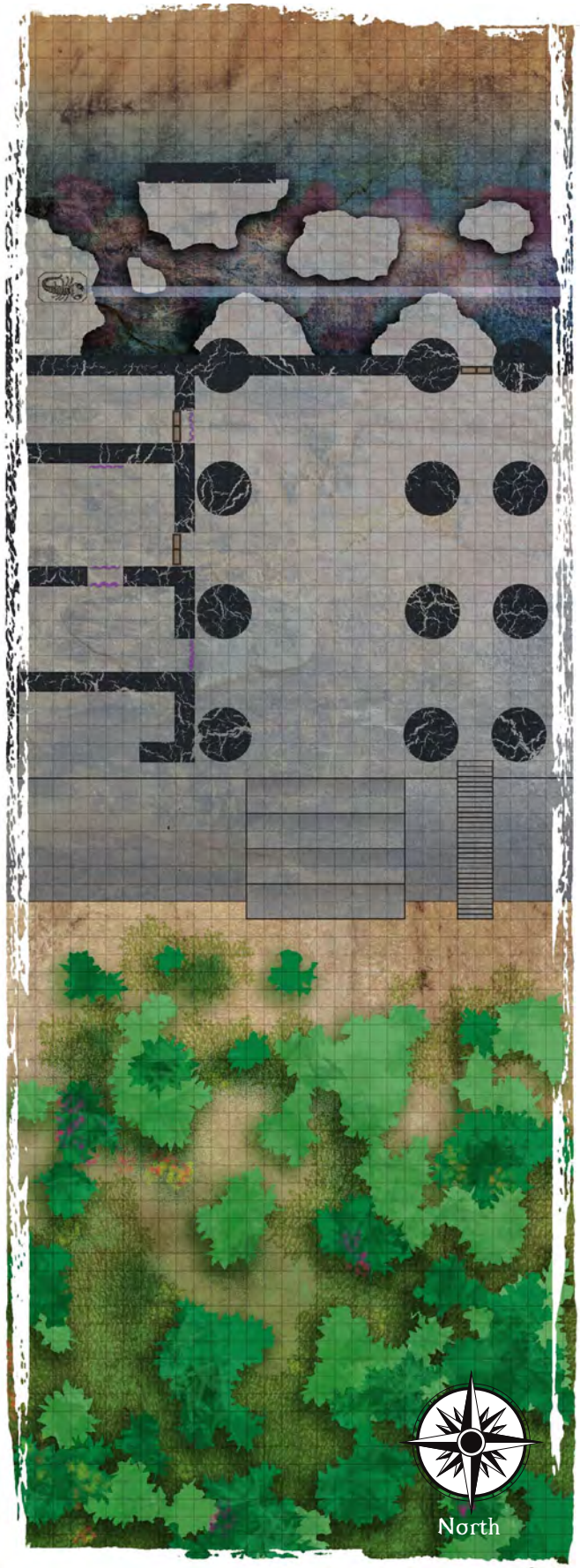


Ramón Pérez

DUNGEON #124 Map & Handout Supplement © 2005 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.



Kyle Hunter



Kyle Hunter

Dungeon #124 Map & Handout Supplement © 2005 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

I have uncovered a plot that threatens the future of the entire city. You have proven yourselves both capable and discreet in the past, and I need both of those qualities now. Meet me at Kaw's restaurant 43 Barrington Way Clibbtop at sunset tonight. Do not fail me.

T.D

Durvan

Dungeon #124 Map & Handout Supplement © 2005 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Attila Adorjany

CHAMBERS OF ANTIQUITIES

By Robert J. Kuntz

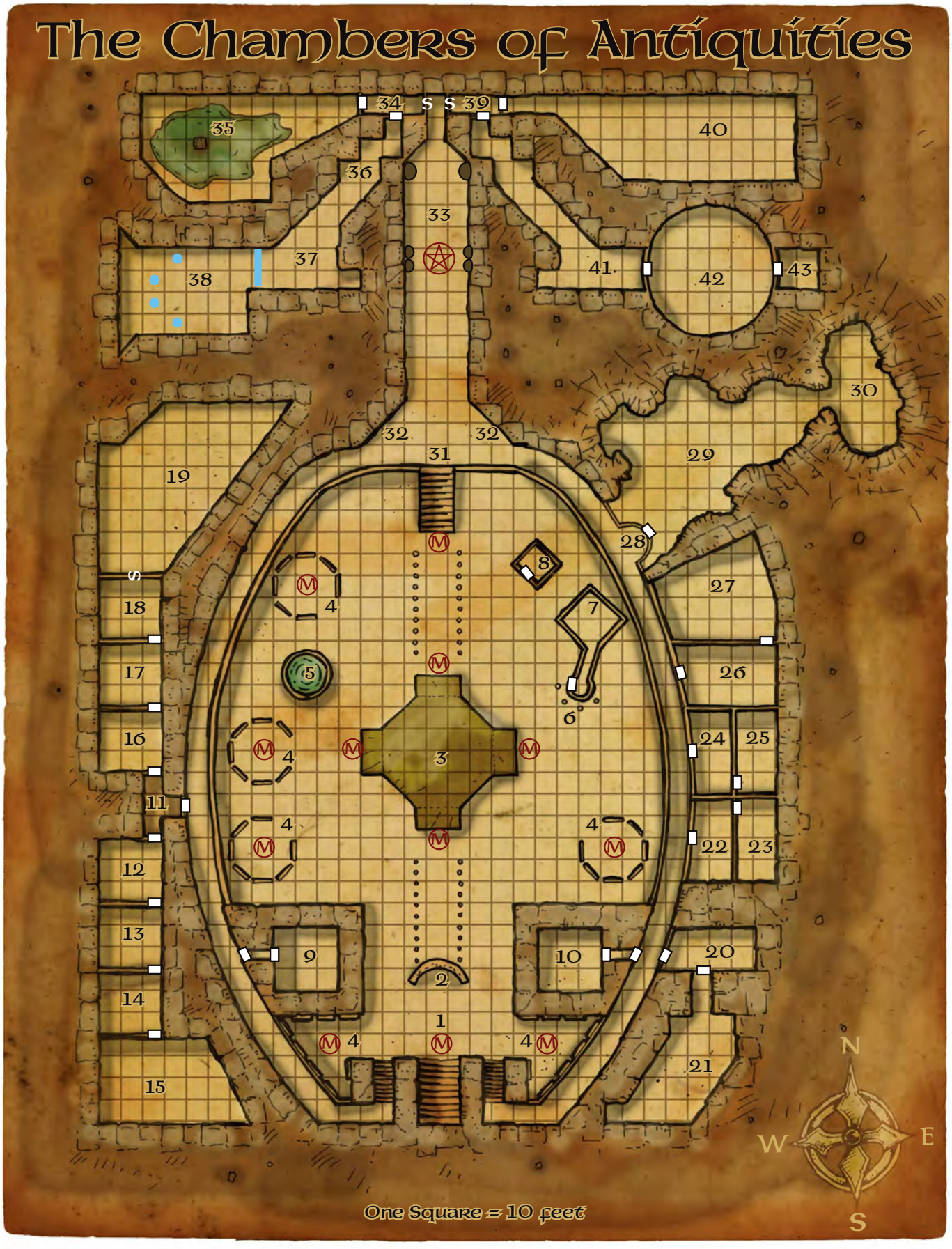
Deep under the ruins of Maure Castle lie the Chambers of Antiquities, vaults designed by ancient wizards to store magic items even they didn't quite understand. A continuation of last year's hit "Maure Castle." A D&D adventure for 16th-level characters.

Andrew Hou

Spell Chisel

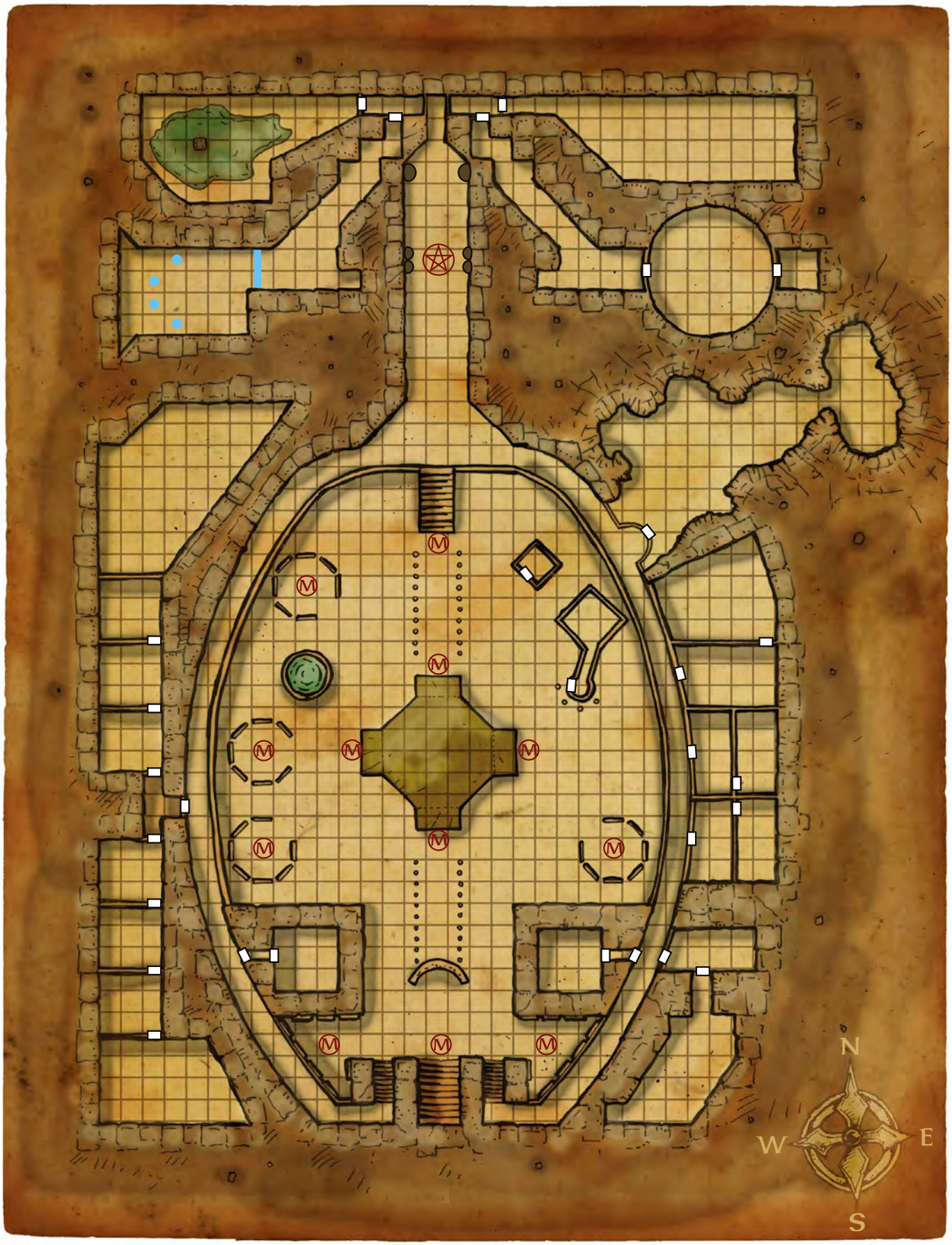
Andrew Hou

Dungeon #124 Map & Handout Supplement © 2005 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.



Robert Lazzaretti

Dungeon #124 Map & Handout Supplement © 2005 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.



Robert Lazzaretti

Dungeon #124 Map & Handout Supplement © 2005 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

1—shed some blood
2—throw the salt
3—jump to the fourth
4—sew the wound
5—scoop the mix and rub the globes

Dragonmaster of Lynn

Attila Adorjany

Arodnap

Attila Adorjany

Zomph's Menagerie

Andrew Hou

Dungeon #124 Map & Handout Supplement © 2005 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.

Hordlings

Andrew Hou

Andrew Hou

Dungeon #124 Map & Handout Supplement © 2005 Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Permission to photocopy for personal use only. All rights reserved.